MISS RICHARDS' BOY.

BY

MARIETTA HOLLEY.

The Bancroft Library

University of California · Berkeley

The Theodore H. Koundakjian
Collection
of American Humor

Truly Yours
Marietta Holley

MISS RICHARDS' BOY,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

MARIETTA HOLLEY

[AUTHOR OF THE "JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE'S" BOOKS.]

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY TRUE WILLIAMS.

AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO.
HARTFORD CONN.

MISS RICHARDS' BOY,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

MARIETTA HOLLEY,

AUTHOR OF THE JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE'S BOOKS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY TRUE WILLIAMS.

AMERICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
HARTFORD, CONN.
1883.

Copyright by
MARIETTA HOLLEY,
1883.

All rights reserved.

PN6157
K6H738mi
1883
x

TO HER MEMORY

WHOSE LOVE

I CANNOT THINK HAS VANISHED WITH HER PRESENCE,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS TENDERLY INSCRIBED

BY HER DAUGHTER,

THE AUTHOR.

Preface.

When publishing a new book it is a custom of authors to say a few words, perhaps to bespeak the gentle good will of the public to the new venture they are sending out in hope.

In publishing these little stories of country life, although I am well aware their merit is not great, yet the cordial friendliness, and too generous appreciation which met my former books, makes me hope that same public will deal gently with the faults of this.

As in my former books, the characters are all from the land of Nowhere, a realm in which I delight.

It was suggested to me by one whose interest in the book is only next to my own, that as the belief was quite universal that "Josiah Allen's Wife's" books were written by a member of the stronger sex, it would be advisable to have my portrait appear in this volume. The belief was of course very flattering to me, but perhaps it is only right to hereby resign the "burden of an honor unto which I was not born."

In conclusion, I wish to thank again the kind friends seen and unseen whose earnest words of praise and encouragement have been the pleasantest reward of authorship.

Marietta Holley,

Adams, N. Y.

Contents.

Miss Richards' Boy,	17
The Outcast,	73
The Deserted Wives,	87
Mrs. Wingate's Charity,	107
Faith Winslow,	129
True Unto Death,	149
Cecil Vail,	171
The Dorcas Society,	221
Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta,	241
Little Christie's Will,	261
John's Wife,	283
The Plain Miss Page,	299
Miss Higgins' Man,	317
Kate's Wedding Gift,	327
Kitty Ross,	345
A Woman's Heart,	365
Katy Avenal,	387

Illustrations.

		Page.
1.	Portrait of the Author,	*Frontispiece.*
2.	Illuminated Title Page,	1
3.	The "Corset" Makes Trouble, (Full Page,)	15
4.	Miss Richards' Boy (Title),	17
5.	Priscilla Ann Cobb,	19
6.	He Stopped the Wagon,	21
7.	Jeremiah Capelin,	22
8.	Jane Tompkins,	27
9.	The "Corset,"	28
10.	Creveland Hall,	31
11.	Claude Richards,	34
12.	"I have been a Wretch,"	36
13.	At the Hall,	40
14.	The Refusal,	44
15.	The Dream,	46
16.	And so He Disappeared,	51
17.	I Felt Myself Lifted Up,	53
18.	We Stood in the Sweet Moonlight,	63
19.	Tail Piece,	71
20.	"What do You Mean?" (Full Page,)	72
21.	The Outcast (Title),	73
22.	The Outcast,	77
23.	Strange Companions,	78
24.	"Look at Your Work,"	80
25.	He Heard a Lad Singing,	81
26.	The Good Book,	85

27. The Rescue, ... (Full Page,) . 86
28. The Deserted Wives (Title), ... 87
29. "Dake," 92
30. "Her El'fant," 93
31. Mrs. Foster Caught Her to Her Breast, ... 94
32. Mrs. Foster was not Dead, ... 99
33. The Search, ... 100
34. Tail Piece, ... 104
35. Mabel Wingate, ... (Full Page,) . 106
36. Mrs. Wingate's Charity, ... 107
37. Giving Him Points, ... 117
38. Tom, ... 119
39. So Out in the Cold Went Tom, ... 122
40. The Little Sufferer, ... 125
41. Tail Piece, ... 127
42. Faith Winslow, ... (Full Page,) . 128
43. Faith Winslow (Title), ... 129
44. The Inquiry, ... 134
45. "Yes, I am Tired, John," 139
46. The Old Song, ... 144
47. Tail Piece, ... 147
48. "He is Coming!" . . . . (Full Page), . . 148
49. True unto Death (Title), ... 149
50. "Must! my Lord Hammond," 153
51. My Face, ... 156
52. Watching and Waiting, ... 162
53. "Oh, Richard! Richard!" 167
54. Tail-piece, ... 169
55. A Body in the Snow, . . . (Full Page) . . 170
56. Cecil Vail (Title), ... 171
57. Our Step-mother, ... 172
58. Watching the Sunset, ... 173
59. Telling Stories, ... 174
60. Mrs. Daggett, ... 177
61. The "Sweet Story of Old," 179
62. Puttin' Her Out, ... 184

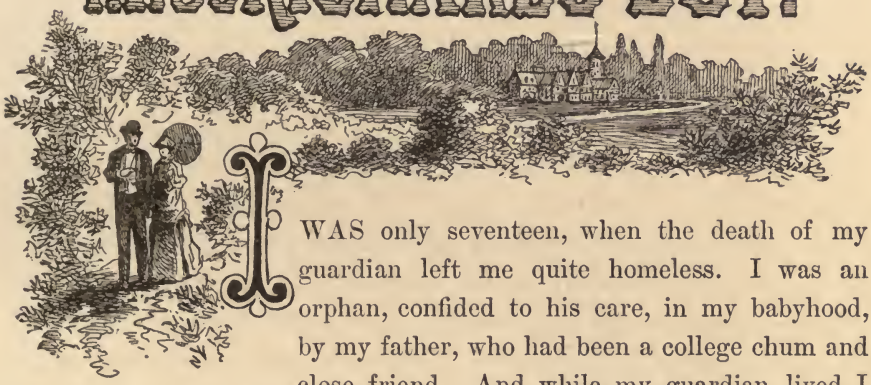
			PAGE.
63.	HAPPY MOMENTS,		185
64.	TIPPECANOE,		186
65.	ASPIRE DINGMAN,		187
66.	THE MANUSCRIPTS,		190
67.	POLLY ANN HAWKINS,		191
68.	I COME A PURPOSE,		192
69.	A FRIENDLY ACT,		195
70.	GIVING UP HIS SEAT,		198
71.	TIP'S MISFORTUNE,		203
72.	BAD NEWS,		207
73.	THE MEETING,		210
74.	THE AFFRAY,		211
75.	NORA VAIL CHESTER,		217
76.	TAIL-PIECE,		218
77.	"HE WAITED TO SEE NO MORE,"	(Full Page),	220
78.	THE DORCAS SOCIETY (Title),		221
79.	"THAT FELLER,"		224
80.	PAUL'S ANTICIPATION,		227
81.	THE LETTER "M.,"		228
82.	A FAVORABLE CONCLUSION,		234
83.	TAIL-PIECE,		238
84.	PERPLEXING QUESTIONS,	(Full Page),	240
85.	BELINDA, CAROLINE, AND HENRIETTA (Title),		241
86.	BELINDA READS THE LETTER,		247
87.	"IT DON'T LOOK WELL,"		250
88.	HOPE AT THE ORGAN,		253
89.	THE THREE DRABBLED DAMSELS,		257
90.	TAIL-PIECE,		258
91.	MY HEART WAS IN MY THROAT,	(Full Page),	260
92.	LITTLE CHRISTIE'S WILL (Title),		261
93.	"TAKE MY SEAT, COLONEL,".		263
94.	JUDITH,		265
95.	LITTLE CHRISTIE,		266
96.	I STOOD LOOKING DOWN UPON HER,		268
97.	UNDER THE PALM TREE,		270
98.	"OH! WHAT A TIME THAT WAS,"		272

			PAGE.
99.	THE PROMISE,		276
100.	TAIL-PIECE,		281
101.	PRUDENCE WINFIELD,	(Full Page),	282
102.	JOHN'S WIFE (Title),		283
103.	COLD COMFORT,		284
104.	JOHN'S WIFE,		289
105.	"I'VE TUMMED TO FIND YOU,"		294
106.	TAIL-PIECE,		296
107.	PET AND "MIT PADIE,"	(Full Page),	298
108.	PLAIN MISS PAGE (Title),		299
109.	PAULINE,		301
110.	THE HOVEL,		302
111.	THE BURIAL,		304
112.	AND THE LOW SWEET WORDS,		305
113.	THE PROPOSAL,		313
114.	TAIL-PIECE,		314
115.	THE MEETING,	(Full Page),	316
116.	MISS HIGGINS' MAN (Title),		317
117.	"O - - - - - H!"		319
118.	HE HELPED HIMSELF GENEROUSLY,		321
119.	AFTER THE RUNAWAY,		324
120.	TAIL-PIECE,		325
121.	KATE'S WEDDING GIFT,	(Full Page),	326
122.	KATE'S WEDDING GIFT (Title),		327
123.	"IT MAKES ME FEEL BAD, CATHERINE,"		328
124.	NATHAN'S APPROACH,		336
125.	TAIL-PIECE,		342
126.	KITTY ROSS,	(Full Page),	344
127.	KITTY ROSS (Title),		355
128.	THE BLAZING STAR,		346
129.	MRS. ROSS,		347
130.	THE HAPPY FAMILY,		352
131.	THE RUNAWAY,		357
132.	A SENSATION,		361
133.	TAIL-PIECE,		362
134.	BEATRICE MANNING,	(Full Page),	364

		Page.
135.	A Woman's Heart (Title),	365
136.	Grace and the Children,	368
137.	Telling Her Fortune,	376
138.	Plain Talk,	380
139.	"Let Me Go with You,"	383
140.	Tail-piece,	385
141.	"There she is," (Full Page),	386
142.	Katy Avenal (Title),	387
143.	Rob,	389
144.	"A Runnin' Down,"	392
145.	Mrs. Wescott,	395
146.	The First Visit,	397
147.	Past Glories,	402
148.	Tail-piece,	410

THE "CORSET" MAKES TROUBLE.

MISS RICHARDS' BOY.



I WAS only seventeen, when the death of my guardian left me quite homeless. I was an orphan, confided to his care, in my babyhood, by my father, who had been a college chum and close friend. And while my guardian lived I never knew the want of the fatherly protection I had lost so early, or the mother-love I had never known. He was very wealthy, cultured, and refined, and he surrounded my young life with beauty and luxury. And so, when, at his death, which occurred very suddenly, his property all passed to a distant, and, as I fancied, in my disappointment, a rather stony-hearted relative, it was a great shock to me. It was like walking, by one step, from a flowering, blooming garden into a desert.

I think, indeed I know, that he meant to have made some provision for my future. The lawyer said so; said he had often spoken of it. He intended to will half of his property to me, but the papers were not made out. And so, friendless and poor, I was left in the world to fight its battles alone. Only seventeen! Young shoulders to bear the burdens of care and labor that so suddenly fell upon them.

We had lived in a very secluded manner, and I had very few acquaintances, but I had read many novels, and was as romantic and sentimental as their teachings and my solitary, dreamy life could make me. I had never been to school, and so I had not even school-girl friendships to help sustain me in my loneliness. I had had a governess until the last year, a kind woman, to whom I had become much attached; and, in my first desolation and dismay, I thought of her as a possible refuge. But after-thought told me she was a paid dependent, now in another family, and I could not possibly go to her.

What was I to do? This hard question, that so many have confronted, stared me in the face the last thing at night and the first in the morning. I was not fitted for teacher in any high department. I was to have gone away to school, to remain until I graduated, at one of the first young ladies' seminaries in the country. My guardian had written to the principal the day he was taken sick; but that was all past now. My education, as far as it had gone, was good, for my governess was thorough and conscientious. But I knew, incomplete as it was, and with my youth and inexperience, I could not compete with the experienced, successful teachers who were so readily to be found. I could play the piano well enough for an amateur, but not well enough to teach others. And as for the last resort of destitute ladyhood, fine sewing, I said to myself, one day, as I sat despairingly looking into the future, I could as soon engineer a railroad as to make a fine shirt.

But by some subtle connection of thought between my last despairing idea and a memory of the past, the recollection of my nurse came to me, the woman who had been like a mother to me till I was ten years old. I thought how kindly she would look up at me from her sewing when I was good, and how she would occasionally tap me on the head with her silver-top thimble, when I was inclined to be noisy and rude. But, after all, how she loved me; and I remembered that she told me, when she went away, "if ever in want of a friend, do not forget Priscilla Ann Cobb." Surely, that time had come.

I knew, at the time she left here, that a small property had fallen to her from a distant relative, and she had gone to live on her own farm. She was a maiden lady, who entertained at that time a strong aversion to men. True, years might have brought changes; she might have married, and forgotten me. But, at all events, it would do no harm to write to her, and maybe she would receive me, until I could think what to do. So I wrote, telling her of my lonely, forlorn state, and asking her if she could receive me for a short time, and if there was any employment near her that I could get, for I should be unhappy if I were dependent upon any one, even my kind old nurse.

PRISCILLA ANN COBB.

In due time the answer came. The letter was long, and although the spelling was bad, the spirit was good; kindness breathed through every word. She answered me "that the house and heart of P. A. Cobb was open and waitin' for me. It would be the happiest day she had spent for years, when she see the little girl that had growed into her heart so tight a comin' through her front gate. She thought some persons might have looked out for me a little better, and, out of such a big property, laid up a little for one they had always carried the idea they thought the world of. Howsumever, she hadn't any reflections to cast upon anybody here, or in any other world whatsumever. My guardian was a man who had his properties, and was agreeabler than most men; and, thank her fortin', she wasn't tied to none of 'em whatsumever, and hadn't no man about her premises to say to her, 'Why do ye so?' No man to hender her from sayin' what she did say, and should say, that I

was welcome, and more'n welcome, to a home with her, as long as I would make her as happy as a queen on her throne by acceptin' of it. And as for work, if it would make me any happier, though I'd no need to wet my fingers in dish-water if I didn't want to, there was the deestrict school. The teacher had jest died off, and they was in a peck of troubles who to get to fill her place. The trustee, Mr. Capelin, had been to her time and agin, askin' her about it, and she had told him plain right out and out, that she didn't keep school-moms by her, and couldn't furnish them on order, thinkin' he had trailed there enough, and he a widower, and it might make talk. Though, as for any encouragement she had gin him, folks knew too well her feelins on the subject to think that she would encourage him to come there only on business, and she a not wantin' to misuse him right out and out, on his wife's account, who was a Christian, if there ever was one, and he good to her in her last sickness, she would say it of him, though men was not to be depended on, and she despised the hull set on 'em.

"The school-mom got five dollars a week, and boarded round. But there would be no boardin' round for me, not if she knowed herself. The school-house was only a little ways from her house, and her house was my home as long as I would consent to stay with her, and it was nobody's business only jest hern. There was no man, thank heaven, a snoopin' round to say to her, 'Why do ye so?' The school was small, and I would have no trouble with none of 'em, unless it was Miss Richards'es boy, and a better dispositioned boy, and a better hearted boy never lived than he was; that she would contend for, let anybody run him down that was a mind to. And he probably wouldn't go to the deestrict school much more, bein' promised to be sent through college by them that was able to do so."

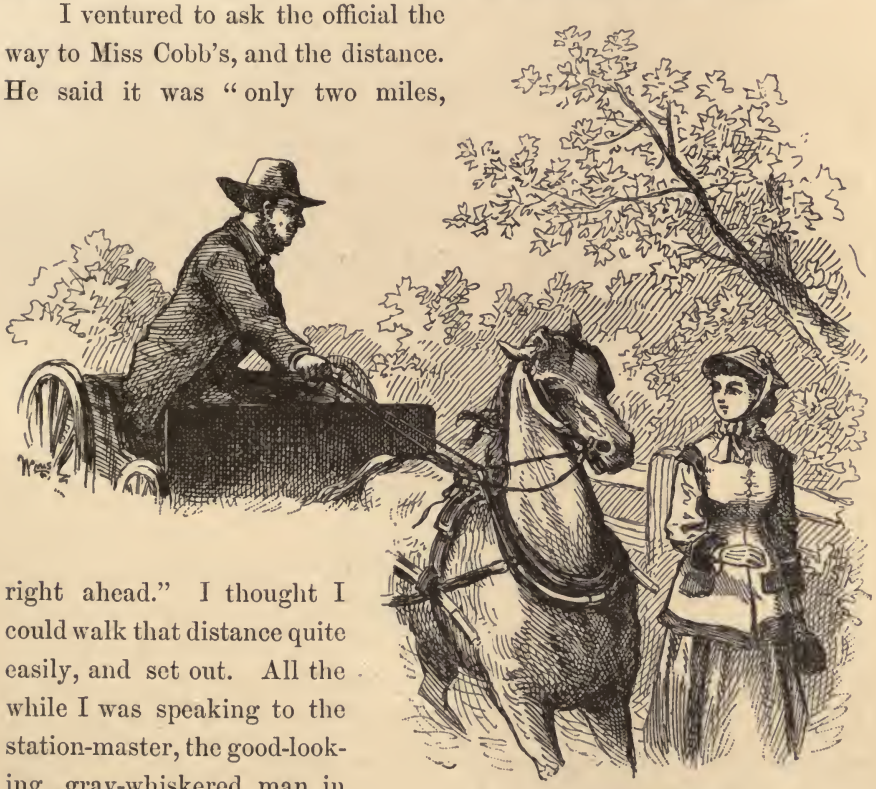
And the letter ended as it begun, with warm and lengthy expressions of affectionate interest in my welfare, and welcome to her home.

One week from the day I received her letter, I was on my way to

Cold Creek Station, where I left the cars at about eleven in the morning, and the train whizzing away, left me on the platform alone.

How quiet everything looked! It seemed as if the world had stopped to rest. Far off, in the green fields, I could see men at work, and the road stretched away like a dusty white ribbon, and lost itself in the green woodland. The station-master stood by the gate, talking with a good-looking, middle-aged man, who had stopped his wagon there.

I ventured to ask the official the way to Miss Cobb's, and the distance. He said it was "only two miles, right ahead." I thought I could walk that distance quite easily, and set out. All the while I was speaking to the station-master, the good-looking, gray-whiskered man in the wagon eyed me closely, with a pair of keen, good-humored eyes. But I had hardly got out into the road, and started on my walk, than he overtook me. He stopped the wagon.



HE STOPPED THE WAGON.

"Are you the little gal Miss Cobb has been expectin' of?"

"Yes, sir."

"So I thought. Now, I am goin' a mile and over, right on your way, and I will take you along as fur as I go, an' welcome, if you say as much."

I accepted his invitation thankfully, and he reached down his strong brown hand, and helped me up to the seat beside him.

"Goin' to teach the deestrict school, so Miss Cobb told me," said my new companion, after I was comfortably seated.

"Yes, sir, if I am fortunate enough to please the trustee."

"He'd be a darnation fool if he wasn't pleased with you. A consummit fool, I say, which he haint in the aforesaid matter jest mentioned, for he likes your looks first-rate — liked you the minute he set his eyes on you. Pretty as a snow-drop, he thought you was. Which, perhaps I ought to say, I am the trustee, who has the present honor of settin' in the buggy with you, Jeremiah Capelin, at your service, mom."

JEREMIAH CAPELIN.

Of course I expressed my pleasure at meeting him, and thanked him for his kind opinion.

"Your name is Hamilton, I heard from a female — in fact, from Miss Cobb herself."

"Yes. Eva Hamilton."

"Yes, jest so. Well, Miss Hamilton, I hope you'll make yourself to hum amongst us. Goin' to have a good place to stay to. A smart, likely, forehanded woman Miss Cobb is."

"Yes, and one of the kindest, truest hearts in the world," said I, warmly.

"Fact," said he. "True as the book of Paul. Has her ways, though."

I told him "most people had." For I could not endure even an insinuated blame against "Auntie," as I always used to call her.

"True agin; true as John, or any other 'postle you'll bring up. If a board don't tip up one end, it will tother. Everybody has their ways; some different; no two like the other one. Wimmin are curious for 'em; curious set wimmin be, as I ever seen. Some hate the men like all posess, some like 'em too well, some will run at 'em, some away from 'em, some will run one way, some another, jest as their way is. She seems to be sot aginst 'em, kinder shyin' off all the time, dretful offish and balky with 'em; her way, curious. I persume men wouldn't hurt her for a dollar. I wouldn't, not for a silver dollar," he added, reflectively.

He stopped a minute, and leaned over the dash-board, and dislodged a fly from the horse's back with his whip, and adjured him at the same time to "get up, and not go to sleep."

I made some remark about the country through which we were passing. He responded pleasantly. But then, after a brief silence, he began again on the subject which seemed to him of most interest.

"No; not for a silver dollar, I wouldn't hurt her. My late wife sot a good deal by Miss Cobb. I lost my companion four years ago this comin' fall," said he, in a confidential tone. "Lost her with the tyfus. Information set in; no savin' of her. Miss Cobb watched over her like a sister; tried her best to pull her through; couldn't do it, though. Good woman, never blamed her a mite; 'twan't her doin's; 'twas the tyfus. Had to give her up. It came tough on me, but I couldn't help myself. That is four years ago, and I haint never seen but one woman sense that I would love to see set across the table from me, in Miss Capelin's chair. Not much chance of seein' of her there, as I can see at the present time. Get up, Jim! Are you goin' to sleep, or are you not?"

Jim, thus adjured, manifested his wakefulness by going a little

faster; and very soon my companion, pointing to a pretty white cottage before us, said:

"There is my place, Miss Hamilton."

I told him "I thought it was a very pretty, cozy place."

"Yes. House as good as new, and a good farm I have got here, as there is in the country — seventy-four acres, all paid for, and not a chick nor a child in the world. Curious, haint it? — and the world full of wimmen and children."

We had now got in front of the white cottage, and I expected Mr. Capelin would stop; but as I saw we were passing by, I said:

"I will get out here, sir, if this is where you stop."

"No; set still. The horse seems determined to go on. Let him go. I generally let him have his way; he is a well-meanin' horse."

I told him I had just as soon walk the rest of the way.

"No; set still. Jim seems determined to go on. Let him have his way."

He carried the idea that it was nothing to him at all, but only a piece of dogged obstinacy and self-will on the part of the horse.

The country was lovely through which we were passing. On one side of the road were pleasant woods. So grand and stately looked all the trees, and in such extremely good order, that I could not help speaking admiringly of them.

"Yes," returned Mr. Capelin. "Creveland Park is as handsome a stretch of woods as you'll find in these parts. These woods, clean and handsome as a picter, runs clear up to Creveland Hall, two good miles from here, or a mile and a half, plumb. Can't see it from here," said he, stretching up his neck in a vain endeavor to peer over the lofty tree-tops. "Handsome old house, too, as there is in the country. Get up, Jim; or, if you want to go to sleep, lay down to it."

Jim tried to assure his master that he did not want to go to sleep, by taking a little faster gait, as I asked him, with interest:

"Is the family living at the Hall?"

"Wall, no, not exactly. The housekeeper and one or two of the servants stay there all the time. The present owner, Hugh Creveland, is a bachelder — a wildish sort of a chap; used to be awful for carryin's on, drinkin', and cuttin' up jinerally. Kinder coolin' down, they say. Time, too, I should think; must be in the neighborhood of forty. Can't be more than five years younger than I be, and I am in the neighborhood of forty-five. I haint said I was forty-five, but in the neighborhood of it."

But the exact age of the worthy Mr. Capelin did not interest me so much as the subject we had been discussing. I had read a great many novels, and the romantic heroes who had been most fascinating to me always were very mature of age, with mysteries in their past lives. They lived in old baronial halls. They had all been very wild in their youth, and the love of some young woman, some friendless orphan, usually, had won them from their evil ways, and saved them. I was only seventeen, and had read a great many novels.

"Is this Mr. Creveland handsome?"

"Yes; handsome as a picter; or — that is, he used to be. I haint seen him for years. How his big, black eyes used to flash and snap in his head. Curly black hair, head right up, afraid o' nobody, wimmen specially. Never was afraid of wimmen a mite. Curious he haint never married. Some day he is goin' to adopt Mrs. Richards' boy. She is the housekeeper. Does a sight for him, any way. Sends him to school all the time; goin' to send him to college, I have heern. Curious to think he haint never got married, haint it? though there is time enough now. Probably the right one haint come along yet. There is time enough for him to be married. Folks older than he is get married, if the right one comes along, and they can coax her up —— I'll be hanged if she haint right there ahead of us! If there haint Miss Cobb, as sure as Christopher Columbus!"

On the side of the road opposite the park there was a little grove, and amongst the scattered trees were tall berry-bushes; Auntie had evidently been picking berries, for there was a bright little tin pail hanging on her arm. She had come out into the highway just in advance of us, and drawing her roomy gingham sun-bonnet over her face like a shelter-tent, she was walking demurely on in its shade, looking neither to the right nor the left, when my driver called out:

"Hello, Miss Cobb, see what I have brought you."

She looked round rather impatiently, I thought, but the minute she caught sight of me, she darted to the wagon, threw both her arms round me, and kissed me loudly, the sun-bonnet falling back on her shoulders, and standing up like a tall picket of gingham.

"S'posen you pass that round, Miss Cobb. Mebby 'twould be agreeable to the rest of the present company," said Mr. Capelin, good-humoredly.

Auntie deigned not to reply to him, but pulled her sun-bonnet once more about her face, and telling me that she would get to the house about as quick as I did, she walked rapidly on. But Mr. Capelin kept along by her side.

"Come, get in, Miss Cobb; don't be a walkin' along by the side of the wagon. It looks too much in the dog line. Get in. Make yourself to hum."

And to my great surprise Auntie did get in, making me sit between them, however, and keeping the whole box sides of her sun-bonnet straight toward the horse. And not one word did she say to Mr. Capelin, only to reply to his good-humored questions as shortly and tersely as possible. Three times during our drive he hunched me with his elbow, and requested me in a whisper to observe "how she was a shyin' off." And when, at Auntie's door, he got out to help her out, and she refused to touch his hand, and almost fell in consequence, he whispered to me again, as he lifted me out:

"Curious, haint it, how balky she is?" But as he turned round to go home, he said, with extreme good-humor, "he hoped I would have a first-rate good time amongst 'em; couldn't fail of it, he knew, with such a woman as Miss Cobb to live with; wished he never should have anything worse happen to him than that would be." Drove off, and then, after going a few steps, held up the "well-meaning" Jim, and turning round on his seat, he asked me "if I wasn't expectin' any band-boxes and things. Because, if I was, Jim had jest as leves bring 'em down as not." I told him I did expect some boxes and my piano, which I had been permitted to keep. He asked me "when they would be along." I told him, and assuring me again that "Jim wouldn't fail to see to it, and bring 'em down," he drove off. As he did so, I said with some enthusiasm:

"Isn't he a very good man, Auntie?"

"Good enough for a man," she replied tartly. "But there haint no more dependence on 'em, as a race, than there is in my clock, and that struck sixty this mornin' at nine o'clock, for I counted it with my own ears. No," she repeated with emphasis, as we walked up the little flower-bordered path from the front gate to the clean, yellow door-steps. "No, I haint no opinion of men as a race."

JANE TOMKINS.

A woman, a few years younger than Auntie, stood in the open door-way, and at these last words of her mistress, she repeated like an echo: "I haint no 'pinion of 'em."

"That is my hired girl, Jane Tomkins," said Auntie, looking toward the door. And pointing the sun-bonnet suddenly toward my ear, she whispered, "And she haint got two idees in her head above dish-water."

And in this way I was introduced to Auntie's cottage and its inmates. It was a pleasant, old-fashioned farm-house, large enough to hold comfort, but not display. In a short time Auntie and Jane had hurried round and cooked a dinner, which would have delighted the hearts of ten hungry men.

After dinner was over, and the dishes washed and put away, Auntie took a small pail of milk in her hand, and asked me if I didn't want to put on my hat, and go out and see her "corset."

I told her I would go, wondering somewhat at her evident idea that a corset was a strange sight to me, and also at her keeping it out of doors. I thought, however, she might have been washing it,

THE "CORSET."

and wished to show me her signal triumph over soiled cloth and whalebone. But she led the way, under cherry and plum trees, back

to a low pair of bars, and leaning over them, she commenced calling gently, "Coday! coday! coday!" And in a few minutes a large white lamb came running along, trampling down the daisies and butter-cups in his desire to get to his mistress. But as he stopped in front of us, I couldn't help laughing out heartily, for over the white, innocent face was a paper cap, tied with a broad ruffle of the paper, like an old woman's night-cap. The effect, as the lamb lifted his eyes expectingly to ours, was indescribably funny to me, but Auntie did look upon it in that way, she was deeply indignant. And she tore it off, tearing it to pieces as she did so.

"Miss Richards' boy agin!" she exclaimed, indignantly. "If he meddles with my corset agin, I'll know the reason why. Dretful cunning he thinks it is. It takes a sight of sense to make night-caps for my corset. This makes three times within a month that my corset has come home with a night-cap on. He has got to stop it, or I'll put the papers onto him. Jest as sure as I live and breathe I'll put the papers on him if he don't stop his goin's on."

What "putting the papers on him" meant, I did not know at that time; something dreadful, I knew by her tone. Later, I learned that she meant sueing him, the "papers" being a summons. Her feelings, which were outraged by this indignity, did not subside again into perfect calmness, until we wandered back into the kitchen-garden. Here the prosperous looks of her plants and vegetables seemed to restore her tranquillity, and she asked me, in a tone of proud assurance, "if I had seen another such a garden this year?"

I told her truly that I had not, for everything did look extremely nice and flourishing. And she went on to say, "that a good garding she would have, for it was half of a body's living." But while she was talking thus composedly to me, her feelings were doomed to another shock, for chancing to stroll near the pickets that separated her "garding" from the highway, I heard her exclaim, suddenly:

"I'll put the papers onto him, jest as sure as I live."

"Who, Auntie?" I asked.

"Miss Richards' boy!" she cried. "Look there," said she, pointing toward the fence. And there, surmounting one of the pickets, like the bust of a hero, was a baby pumpkin carved into a grotesque likeness of Miss Cobb, her Roman nose, her spectacles, her broad cap border. There was real genius in it. And with all my dignity, (I was very dignified and old at that time,) I could scarcely keep from laughing. But Auntie was deeply indignant.

"That is jest the way that boy torments the life out of me, and as good as I have been to him; warnin' him, every chance I get, to leave his wild ways, and flee from the wrath to come; and tellin' him, time and agin, that if he didn't turn and stop behavin', he would wreathe in future torment; exhorted him, told him jest what a lost worm of the dust he is. Was tellin' him so yesterday. Always took jest such an interest in him. And now see the pay I get for it. I'll put the papers onto him, if it goes on so much longer."

Jane, the hired girl, had come out into the garden to pick some berries for supper, and she remarked, like an echo crystalized in flesh and blood:

"I would put the papers onto him, if I was in your place. He is a bad, good-for-nothing boy?"

"He haint no such thing. A better hearted boy never lived. You had better keep still, and tend to your berries."

I was much surprised at the sudden change in Auntie's words. I was not so wise then in the affection that claims the exclusive right of scolding its object.

"Does he live far from here, Auntie?" I asked, not that I cared to know on his account. I was not thinking of "Miss Richards' boy," but upon the strange and mysterious hero, Hugh Creveland.

She turned and pointed toward the south.

"Do you see that big stone house, with the Gabriels on the ruff?"

"The what, Auntie?"

"The house with the Gabriel ends."

I followed the direction of her long, slim forefinger, and saw the tall, pointed gables rising above the dark oak trees.

"It looks as if it were a splendid old house."

"It is. The house with the gabriel ends can't be beat, nor anywhere come up to it in this country."

"Could I go and look at it some day, Auntie? Would the housekeeper allow me? Is she a good woman?"

"She has her properties."

"Maybe Mr. Creveland wouldn't care to have people going over his house, in his absence. Is he a nice man, Auntie?"

"He has his properties."

I saw that Auntie was not desirous of prolonging the conversation, and so I outwardly restrained my curiosity, and followed her into the house. But my mind was no more engrossed by the ideal heroes

of the romances I had read and wept over. It was filled with the image of Hugh Creveland.

Fully a dozen times during the fortnight before I commenced my school did Auntie come in from her "garding," or pasture, rampant to "put the papers onto Miss Richards'es boy." But did the much-suffering Jane venture to echo her revilings ever so feebly, she would only turn the torrent of her indignation toward her; and once she told Jane, in an injured, rebuking tone, "that she should be glad if she had his properties."

In fact, I could not discern any evil in any of the deeds that vexed Auntie so. Only the very spirit of fun and mischief seemed inspiring him. Once, I know, the "corset" came home at night—his pasture led back through a shady lane to the entrance of the park—and he came home with his long locks parted on the top of his head, braided, and done up with a hair-pin, and wire spectacles fastened over his wise, innocent eyes. Never did I see Auntie so fully determined as she was upon this occasion "to put the papers onto him"; for nothing touched her more nearly than any disrespect to "the corset."

Later, when I knew the utter dreariness of the life he led at home, his seclusion from the world, his mother's gloom and melancholy, and his total lack of all society and recreation, I could better understand how the naturally gay spirits and irrepressible life of "Miss Richards'es boy" found vent in such whimsical channels. But at that time I could not understand how any one as old as I was, and I was very old, could possibly be so childish and undignified. I was very dignified.

It was a dreamy habit of mine to form pictures in my own mind of people of whom I had heard much and had not seen; and I decided that Claude Richards was stout, a good deal shorter than I, although he was just six months older, Auntie said; thick-set, with very red cheeks and black eyes, and large, red hands, that he could find no fitting place for. In fact, I decided that Miss Richards'es boy was rather vulgar looking.

But time rolled on, and brought the day that I was to commence my school. And I wended my way toward the school-house, with my new silver bell in my hand, emblem of my sovereign dignity; although many days have passed by since then, I have never, even distantly, approached the venerable age I then enjoyed. I had not worn long dresses a very great while, but I put on my longest one that morning, a blue muslin, that trailed slightly, and I wound my abundant hair in a great shining coil at the back of my head. It wanted to curl. In fact, it would assert itself and have its own way, in little waves and rings, whenever it could elude my close vigilance. But I did my best to restrain it in matronly shape.

Mr. Capelin, the trustee, came down to Auntie's in the morning, as she stood by the gate seeing me off, and he offered to go down to the school-house with me. In fact, that worthy man made many errands in our direction. But I told him "it wasn't necessary. I was not at all afraid of having any trouble."

"Let me see anybody making you any trouble," said he, in a defiant tone. "Why, I should jest as soon think of abusing a moss rose-bud as you. You are just as sweet and pretty as one, this minute." And he patted my head as I passed out of the gate. I know I felt that his patting my head and comparing me to a bud, instead of a full-blown flower, was compromising to my dignity. But I said nothing, and after I left them, I looked back and saw that he was talking to Auntie quite earnestly and pleasantly; and she, with her whaleboned sun-bonnet drawn defiantly over her eyes, was, to all outward appearance, paying him not the slightest attention; and I know I thought that Mr. Capelin was probably, in his own mind, bewailing her uncontrollable tendency to be "balky, and shy off."

There was quite a little knot of pupils collected around the school-house door,—small, white-headed boys and demure little girls, with preternaturally clean faces and stiffly-starched pink calico aprons. I

greeted them with benignancy and dignified affection. It was not quite school-time, and I was standing in the open door, looking across the road at the thick foliage of the oak trees, for Creveland Park ran along the opposite side of the road, when a little gate opened in the high wall opposite me, and a young gentleman came through. I said young gentleman, although he was a lad of probably about seventeen; but he looked so aristocratic, so noble, that I said at once to myself, "It must be either a relative of the Crevelands or some grand acquaintance of the family visiting there." He had such an easy, graceful walk, there was such a proud, careless grace in the pose of the handsome head, that, as he seemed coming toward me, my dignity almost fled before it. As I said, his destination seemed to be the school-house, and I expected to hear him ask me the distance to the next village, or perhaps complain of some misdemeanor of my pupils in the park, or something like it, when the children behind me, having caught sight of him, commenced shouting, rapturously, "Claude! Claude! Claude Richards!" And

CLAUDE RICHARDS.

I, in my mute surprise, looking up into the handsomest face I had ever seen, met, for the first time, the true, honest eyes of "Miss Richards'es boy," the very handsomest face I had ever seen; that I decided in my own mind at the first glance. And my next wonder was, where did he get his elegant, aristocratic looks and ways, his air of perfect repose, and easy manners? His eyes were blue, clear, and steadfast; blue eyes, that met your own frankly and fearlessly. They were shaded with long lashes, that, at times, gave rather a dreamy look to them; and at times they would laugh, and sparkle, and run over with merriment. They were the most wonderfully changeful and expressive eyes that I ever saw; but whatever expression they might assume to others, they were never otherwise than kind to me.

I had no trouble with my school. My pupils were all good; and above all others in goodness and kindness to me was Miss Richards'es boy, although, for the first few weeks, he occasionally gave vent to his inexpressible spirits in mischievous pranks, which I would always correct and rebuke in a gentle, but grave and dignified, manner. For, although "Miss Richards'es boy" was a half-year older than I, and although I suspected at the time that his education was far superior to mine, still I felt, in my dignified position as teacher and the founder of my own fortunes, as if I might be his grandmother. And so, at considerable personal inconvenience at times, for I had an eye for fun myself, I had always maintained a lady-like composure and calm demeanor.

But one day—it was the fourth week of my school, I think,—I lost my composure and serene demeanor, and it was the fault of "Miss Richards'es boy." All that day I had had a torturing headache. I had felt so ill in the morning, that Auntie said, "instead of going to school, I had better go and lay down, and let her pull the curtings down, and I was as white as her corset." And Mr. Capelin, who had sauntered down to see if he could borrow a plow, although he knew he could just as well have obtained a cannon or an iron-clad war-ship of Auntie as a

plow. He also joined his entreaties that I would "stay at home, and let Miss Cobb doctor me up. He wished he could have the chance; he would give a silver dollar for it," he said, looking at Auntie, with good-nature beaming from his eyes.

Auntie, of course, paid no sort of attention to his words; but I thanked him for his kind advice, and I told him I thought I could teach well enough. I thought my headache would wear off. But it did not.

"I HAVE BEEN A WRETCH."

It grew worse and worse, although my paleness vanished, I knew, for my cheeks burned like fire. I dare say I looked healthier than ever, and he had no idea of my feeling so ill. But it was about the middle of the afternoon, when every word I spoke seemed to rend my head, and every noise and move of the children was torture to me, that Claude came to me with an exercise he wished me to correct. And there, instead of the mathematical puzzle, was a picture of a school-

ma'am, with an unnaturally long whip in her hand, driving her brood of scholars up the mount of knowledge. As I looked at it I laughed wildly; and then, laying my head down on the desk, I burst into tears. But as I laid there, sobbing like a baby, that I was, I felt a hand upon my head, a gentle hand, and it was a gentle voice that said:

"I have been a wretch, to annoy you so; but I'll never do it again. Try me, and see if I will."

But as I still sobbed on, he added, remorsefully:

"Or you may turn me out of school, if you had rather. Just say the word, and I'll go this minute. But I'll be good if you'll let me stay. See if I am not."

Of course, I told him to stay, and that I was ill and nervous, or I should not have noticed such a trifle. And I know how true a compassion and remorse looked out of his blue eyes at my words. And I recollect, he went down to a spring a quarter of a mile away to get some water of extra coldness to bathe my head; and then he insisted on hearing all my classes for me. And I remember I went home that night with the conviction that I had never seen any one manlier and kinder than "Miss Richards'es boy."

And as the days rolled by that impression deepened and intensified. His wild pranks, his irrepressible outbursts of fun grew less frequent. He applied himself diligently to his books; and, surely, no teacher could have a kinder, gentler pupil than he. And, in spite of my advanced age and my mild, dignified airs of superiority, he seemed to have a sort of protecting instinct, and tried in every way to guard me from annoyance and save me from anxiety. There was one white-headed little chap who caused me great trouble. I was very ambitious to teach my smaller pupils a great deal, and I daily drilled them in Bible and historical questions. And this little fellow, I know, never failed of affirming that he was made by "George Washington."

I think, after a while, he said it through obstinacy; for I drilled him so thoroughly that he must have known that he had a diviner origin. But this child seemed to have a chronic and perennial desire to put an end to the life that he insisted had its origin in "George Washington." And he seemed determined to kill himself while at school. And as he was an only child, and his mother a pitiful-looking little widow, I felt as if a great responsibility had indeed fallen on me. At noon and recess, if I were not continually on the lookout, he would either fall in the creek, and be nearly drowned, or drop down from tree-tops, and be brought in bruised and bloody. He was my youngest pupil, and I loved him very much; and it seemed as if my hair must turn as white as his own through watchfulness and anxiety. I told Claude one day how I felt about it; for, being my oldest pupil, and so very, very good to me, I had fallen into the habit of going to him with all my small perplexities and cares; and Claude told me to "not give myself any uneasiness on account of the young 'Father of his Country'"—for so they irreverently called him—"for he would take him under his wing." And he was as good as his word. He did. He either kept him with him, or he found means to amuse him in some safe manner; and so that great load was taken off my shoulders. And then there was another boy, not large in body, but with immense powers of making himself disagreeable. Against this boy's annoyances Claude was my rock of defence. Indeed, he was so kind to me, so thoughtful, so solicitous for my welfare, so intelligent and delightful a companion, and in every way so straightforward, and manly, and honest, that I used often to wonder what I should do if it were not for "Miss Richards'es boy."

My society seemed to give him also great contentment. He came to me with all his joys and with all his troubles. One day he said to me, what he said he had never spoken of before to any one, how gloomy his home was. I had been lecturing him about some of his pranks, and he laughed heartily when I told him of Auntie's consternation about her "corset." I did not tell him, however, how narrowly he had

escaped having "the papers put onto him." He laughed, his hearty, ringing laugh, as I said, and then there was a wistful, weary look crept into his blue eyes, as he said:

"I oughtn't to say it, even to you, but I just wish you knew what life was at our house. My mother loves me, and is good; but she never speaks, if she can help it. She will not have any society herself, or allow me to have. She is so still, so melancholy! Do you know, I never heard her laugh in my whole life. Home is like a grave, only the corpse is a living one."

I pitied him, and I told him so; and I know my sympathy seemed to cheer him up wonderfully, though it was not his way to be sad long. And I thought, in the future, when I should have wedded my noble and mysterious hero, and was living in grandeur unexcelled, that then it would be one of my greatest delights to make a happy home, in which to welcome my boy.

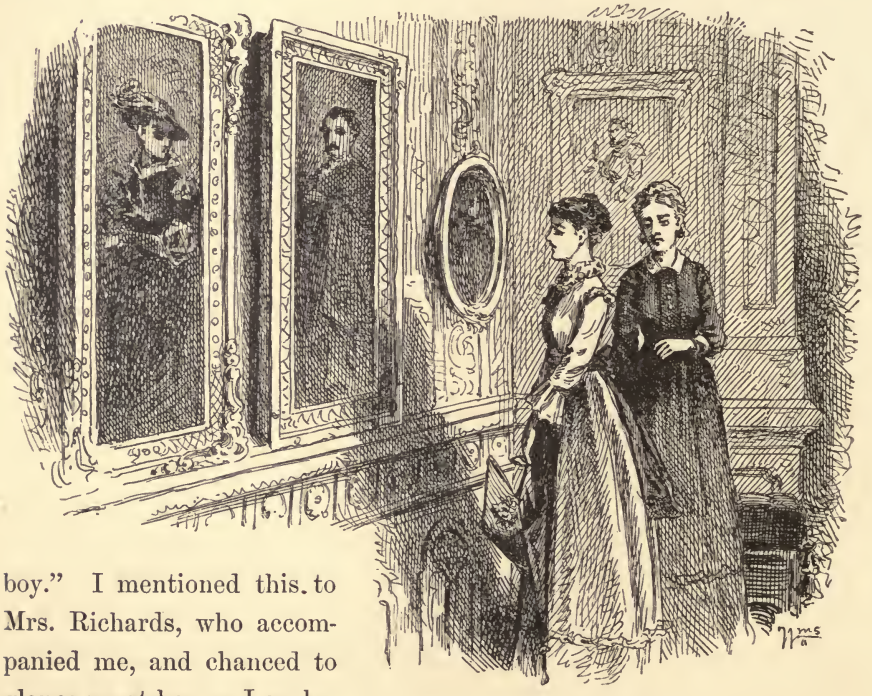
In all this time, although I had dreamed of it by night and by day, I had never seen Creveland Hall, the home of the hero of my imagination, Hugh Creveland. Auntie had told me "she would go with me some day, and let me see the pictures, bein' as I was such a case for 'em." But she had put it off from day to day. Probably Mr. Capelin would have called her "balky."

But at last, it was just after my summer school had closed, she told me, one morning, that "if it was agreeable to me, we would walk over to the house with the gabriel ends," as Auntie never failed, with inexorable determination, to call it. She said she had business with the gardener. We set out accordingly. It was about a mile, and by a beautiful road, winding through to the park.

Grand as I had imagined Creveland Hall to be, it transcended all my expectations. I had never seen anything of the kind before. Its imposing size quite overpowered me.

Had not Auntie assured me so many times that "Miss Richards had her properties," I should have been afraid of her, such a white,

still ghost of a woman! There was not a look of her son in her face. But up in the long picture-gallery was a portrait, that, although dark and haughty in its beauty, had an indescribable likeness, in the proud poise of the head, the droop of the long eyelashes, to "Miss Richards'es



AT THE HALL.

boy." I mentioned this to Mrs. Richards, who accompanied me, and chanced to glance up at her, as I spoke. I was astonished to see the change in her face. She did not look confused at all. But in her eyes, as she gazed steadfastly on the handsome, haughty face, I read wounded love, hatred, contempt, and, above all, a powerlessness such as I have sometimes seen in hunted animals. Instinctively, I turned away, and looked at another picture, a tall lady, clad in a velvet habit, with a falcon on her wrist. But the gentle, low voice of Mrs. Richards recalled my attention.

"That gentleman? That," she said, calmly, "is the present owner

of the estate, Hugh Creveland; and that tall lady was his grandmother. She was the daughter of an English lord."

Not a trace of emotion could I see in her face now. It was utterly impassive. I decided that my former impression must have been fancy. But, to tell the truth, I did not give Mrs. Richards much thought, for my mind was too much engrossed with the dark, handsome face I had seen at last, the mysterious hero of all my romantic dreams, the prince of all my castles in the west, Hugh Creveland.

And from this time, more than ever, he was my imaginary hero. I thought of all the mysteries in his past life. I thought of him, a wanderer for so many years, with no gentle voice to welcome him home after his long and perilous sojourning, no tender eyes to weep over his absence and grow bright at his return. No wonder he was a rover, an exile. But some gentle hand would save him; some love would shield him from all temptation. And then, to be mistress of Creveland Hall. Why that, in itself, was enough to make any woman's bliss.

The days, the months passed on. Two years elapsed. But so gently did they go that it seemed as if Time had wreathed his hour-glass with poppies and mandragora and fallen asleep.

The "corset" and the "garding" were prosperous. Mr. Capelin still haunted the house on every possible occasion and on the strangest errands. To his discouragement, Auntie still "shyed off, and was balky."

It was a secluded life that I led, but I was not at all lonely. I was content and happy; and that I was so I think was greatly owing to "Miss Richards'es boy." Thrown together constantly as we were, realizing, on closer acquaintance, how good and noble he was, he came to seem in a way to belong to me. With true maternal interest, I would give him long lectures upon life and its duties. I wished him to be so noble and successful. I beseeched him to make his future as grand as my hopes were for him. I told him, as his teacher, I should feel that he honored me by every exalted deed of his.

Claude took my lectures in good part. In fact, he seemed to like to be with me, whatever I might say to him. He did not come to my school longer than for the first term; but I saw him every day. He studied at home, and recited to the clergyman at Cold Creek, and was making good progress, I understood. Mr. Creveland had written about his going to college; but his mother disliked having him leave home as long as he could learn of the good rector.

I was nearly nineteen, and Claude six months older, when it began to dawn on me that "my boy" loved his teacher, not as the dignified instructor I had tried to be, not in the filial way I had always encouraged him to regard me, but as a woman to be won and wed. And I remember just how the knowledge impressed me when I first became aware of it. I remember just the answer prepared for him, when he should come to use plain words of love. It was to be a refusal, of course; but it was to be benignant, thoughtful, kind, yet firm, firm as fate.

It was to commence, "My dear boy," in a motherly, affectionate tone; and it was to contain a good deal of moral instruction and exhortation. It was to be long, and was to have the effect of melting him to tears. And I was to retain a gentle composure and calmness and a demeanor combining the maternal with the dignified instructor.

But how different it was, to be sure, from what I had dreamed. It was the evening after he received a letter from Mr. Creveland, saying that the arrangements were all made, and Claude was to go to college, and his outfit was to be obtained in the college town, my own old home, and he was to be there on such a day of the month. A friend of Mr. Creveland, a lawyer, with whom he had become acquainted while abroad (and, strange to say, it was the very relative of my guardian whom I had considered stony-hearted), was to meet him, and would attend to all necessary business. Claude was to start within a week.

It was a lovely afternoon, and I had wandered down to a favorite

resort of ours on the bank of the lake, at the southern extremity of the park. And Claude followed me there, and in the sweet sunset told me he was going away.

"Going?" said I, with a great pang at my heart. Who would be left to take my boy's place? Who was ever so kind, so good to me? And so the tears were in my eyes, instead of his, when he told me "how dear I was to him, how I seemed so near and precious, like a part of his own life."

I know his words gave me great content and rest; and as we stood there, side by side, it seemed as if the great world withdrew from us, with all its inhabitants, even my mysterious hero, and Claude and I were as much alone, and yet as blessed, as Adam and Eve in Eden.

But I made a great effort to recover my dignity. I tried to remember some of the lectures I had prepared for the occasion. It was quite a failure as a lecture, I think; but it served a purpose. For the first time in my life I saw Claude angry. He accused me of heartlessness, and said "I did not care for him, was cold, indifferent."

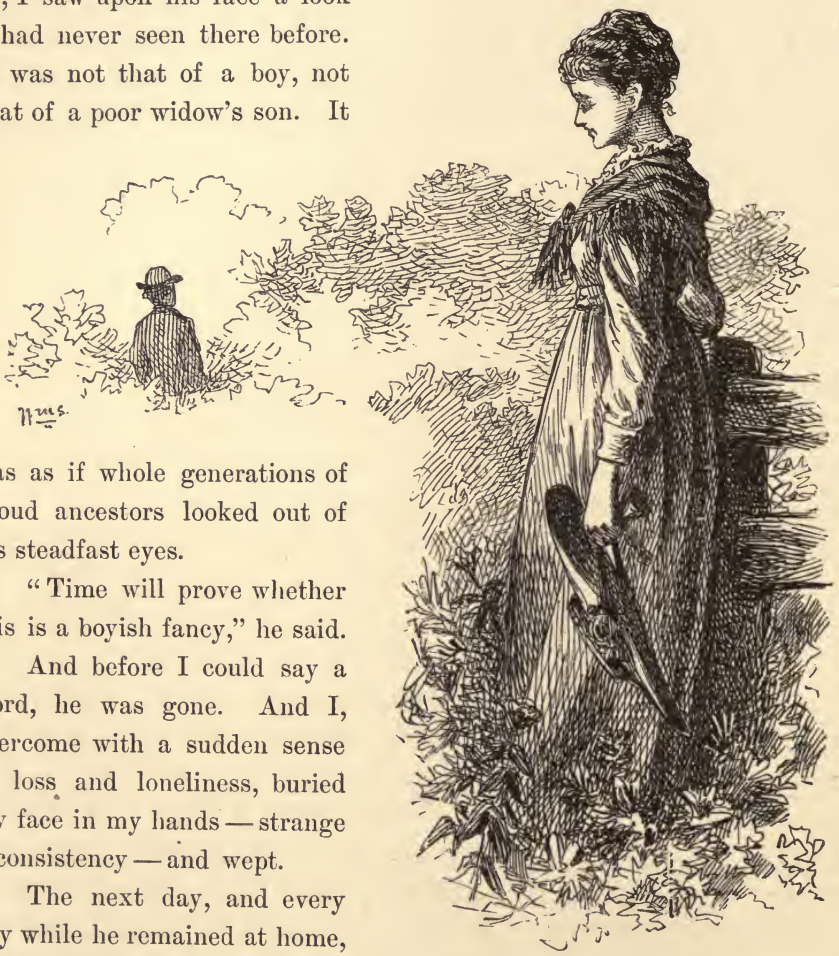
His vehement passion for a moment restored my self-assurance. I said:

"I do not care for you, my dear boy? No one can ever have a warmer interest in your welfare, not even your mother."

"If you want to drive me distracted, talk to me a little more about motherly interest, and such rubbish. I am older than you, and you know it."

"Time cannot be rightly reckoned by years alone. There is an experience that makes people old while they are yet young. Age does not always depend upon days and months. I am much, very much older than you, my dear boy. And it is my duty to tell you that you will forget all this in the future, and will bestow your love more worthily and happily upon some young girl, some blue-eyed fairy. (My eyes were brown.) You will get over this boyish fancy."

Perhaps I expected that he would interrupt me with tearful pleadings and entreaties; but, if so, I was mistaken. He was silent for a moment. When I glanced up at him (he was a great deal taller than I), I saw upon his face a look I had never seen there before. It was not that of a boy, not that of a poor widow's son. It was as if whole generations of proud ancestors looked out of his steadfast eyes.



THE REFUSAL.

"Time will prove whether this is a boyish fancy," he said.

And before I could say a word, he was gone. And I, overcome with a sudden sense of loss and loneliness, buried my face in my hands — strange inconsistency — and wept.

The next day, and every day while he remained at home, Claude came to see me, as usual, but not in the *role* I had marked out for him; pale, anguish-stricken, with despairing eyes, vexing me with entreaties. No, nothing of the

kind. Not by a word, or a glance, did he show that I was any more to him than the friend that he valued and respected. And by some mystic process, beyond my reasoning or will, he grew older, and I younger every day. Younger, and weaker, and far less wise, although no word or look of his ever helped to give me the impression.

On his return from college, during his first vacations, the same subtle mystery remained, and increased. My boy was getting to be very, very much older and stronger than I.

No brother could be tenderer and kinder to an only sister, but he never spoke again of love. Still, in spite of his silence, I felt in my heart, I read it sometimes in his blue, honest eyes, that time was, indeed, proving the strength of what I had called his boyish fancy.

I had now reached my twentieth birthday. It was a still, lovely June twilight. I stood by the low, brown gate, in front of Auntie's, looking at the beauty of the western sky, when I heard the slow, steady tramp of a horse, coming down the road. The rider was a stranger to me, I thought, at the first glance; but as he came nearer, I knew him at once. He saw me, and raised his hat with easy grace. But at that very moment, the "corset" sprang out across the road, the gray horse shied and reared, and Hugh Creveland, flung headlong, lay insensible at my feet.

A couple of men, one of them the gray-headed old gardener at the Hall, chanced to be coming down the road, and as they saw the fall, they ran up, and carried him into the house, and laid him on the lounge, in the sitting-room. He was injured considerably, and an arm was broken, besides a severe bruise on the temple. But the doctor who cared for him was skillful, and Auntie was a good nurse, and he "got along famously," so he said.

It seems like a dream to me, his stay in our cottage, or a page from the romances I used to delight in; and like a dream within a dream, is one shadowy memory.

It was the night after his accident, when the news, of course, had gone out, — magnified, as in all small places, — that he was fatally injured. The doctor had given an opiate to ease his pain, and gone home. Auntie had lain down upon the lounge, in the next room. I was left to watch, and sat, half-asleep, and half-awake, in the large arm-chair, drawn up beside the window. The lamp was

THE DREAM.

turned down to a faint spark upon the table. The moon hung low in the west, like a large silver globe. The night-winds stirred the tendrils and clusters of the creeping rose at the window, and the moonlight threw their shadowy reflections on the carpet. How they waved, and flickered, and chased each other. And was it a dream,

or did a still figure glide across these shadows — a woman's form — and pause by the couch of the sick man, wringing its hands? And did I hear a voice, or did I imagine it?

"Is it, then, a last farewell? Is your bad life to be ended here? Or will you live to break other women's hearts, as you have mine?"

The voice, or the wind, whatever it was, ceased; the still, white figure, or the shadow of the moonlight, glided away, and was lost; and the shadows mingled and intertwined strangely and grotesquely. The next thing I remember, the morning sun was shining in the room, and Auntie stood by the table, mixing a draught for her patient.

"Where is the woman, Auntie?" were my first words.

"What woman?"

"The woman who came here last night. She looked like Mrs. Richards."

"There has been no one here. You have been dreaming, child."

"I saw her, I am sure of it."

"It is impossible, for I was awake every minute of the night."

Now, as Auntie was one of the kind who consider it a personal affront to be accused of going to sleep, except in their lawful beds, I said no more. But the dream remained with me.

And like a dream was my life for the next few weeks. Mr. Creveland got better, and after a few days was able to sit in a great easy-chair. The doctor, indeed, hinted of some internal injury, that demanded perfect rest, and care, lest it might terminate dangerously. But Mr. Creveland was so imperious, so used to having his own way, that he paid little heed to these admonitions. Meanwhile he was gentleness itself to me, and fascinating beyond words, when he chose. He staid with us six weeks. A new world he brought to me, new thoughts, new subjects of interest. Not a happier world, for it was too restless, too disturbed, too uncertain and strange, for simple content and happiness.

I had never thought much of my books, in my hitherto calm life. My little mirror, in my room, told me that I had a fair face, a face with big, wondering, brown eyes, and a wistful, appealing look. But I had never given these things much thought, or regarded them as a means of power. Now, however, as I met the bold, handsome, admiring eyes of Hugh Creveland, there was something in them that brought back my guardian's words to me, "Your face, my little Eva, will make your fortune."

I was very artless, very innocent, I believe; but I had not been in Hugh Creveland's presence a week, before I knew he loved me. He did not say so, in direct words; but I read it in every glance of his eyes, every tone of his voice; and above all, by that strange intuition that lets women read hearts so well.

And as the days passed by, I saw that he was fighting against that love, with all his might. I thought it was his pride, that stood in the way of his fancy. He acted so strangely at times! His manner would change so suddenly, from cheerfulness to gloom and despondency. He liked to hear me play and sing, and he would read aloud for hours, sending to the Hall for piles of books from the great library. He would read sounding old ballads, recounting noble deeds, and exquisite love poems, making them seem real, by their rapt, soulful expression; and then sometimes he would throw the book down, and make satirical remarks upon the folly of believing in anything in this world, especially in love and truth.

And yet, at times, he so fully, unmistakably showed his love for me, in every tone and glance, that I knew it was only his pride that kept him silent, and made him struggle against his fancy for an unknown, penniless girl.

Claude came home, on a short vacation, while Mr. Creveland was at Auntie's. The first time Claude called, I did not see him, for I was busy reading to Mr. Creveland, and Auntie did not send for me.

But he came again, the next day; and oh, how glad I was to see him! I thought he looked pale, and his honest blue eyes seemed unnaturally large. I told him I knew he was studying too hard.

"Yes, he was studying hard," he said. "Besides his usual studies at college, he was studying law, at spare hours, with Mr. Lansing, the lawyer, and friend of Mr. Creveland's. It would help him, he said, when he left college. He would not have to spend so much time in his law studies then, and he was in haste to get along as fast as possible; for he wished to repay Mr. Creveland for the help he had given in his education. He should insist on paying back every penny of it," he said, proudly.

I had a vague heartache after he had gone. I was worried, I said, to see him looking so pale. And I repeated to myself, with a good deal of emphasis, "If he were my own boy, I could not love him any better."

Mr. Creveland was very kind to Claude, and after he went away that night, spoke of him in the kindest manner, but with an odd agitation, I fancied.

I remember, thinking, in a dreamy fashion, that night, after I laid my head upon my pillow, that if Mr. Creveland's love did, indeed, prove stronger than his pride, and if I should, in the future, become mistress of all his riches, why, how much I might do for Claude. How I could smooth his path in life! I know I thought a great deal more about my happiness, in helping him to a grand future, than I did of my own happiness, in enjoying such grandeur.

The six weeks rolled away at last, and the day came when Mr. Creveland was to leave us. He had a fancy to walk over to the Hall, through the little foot-path in the park; and though Auntie proposed to have the carriage sent for, he wouldn't hear to it. So Auntie had to content herself with making preparations for a dinner of uncommon magnificence, for he said he wouldn't go until afternoon.

It was Saturday; there was no school, and I was at home for the entire day. I could hear Auntie and Jane bustling about from kitchen to pantry, and from cellar to kitchen, as I sat with my sewing, in my favorite seat, by the western window of the sitting-room. It was a pleasant little nook, for on the broad, old-fashioned window-sill, I had a window-box filled with delicate ferns, and geraniums of different colors, and two or three climbing-plants, that reached up, trying to enfold the cage where my two canaries sang.

All the morning, Mr. Creveland had acted odder, more restless, more mysterious than ever. He now came in, and advancing to the window, leaned against the opposite side, and stood looking down upon me. I felt that his eyes were upon me, though I did not look up, but stitched away, as if my life depended upon it.

How the birds sang! As if they desired to give an extra melodious serenade to speed our departing guest.

"Foolish little birds!" said Mr. Creveland, softly. "Don't you think so, Miss Hamilton?"

"Foolish? Why, Mr. Creveland?"

"To sing so merrily, when they are captives. I should think their hearts would be breaking."

"Perhaps they are unselfish. Maybe they are singing for others, to make others happier, and so forget their own condition."

I spoke lightly, and smiled. But as I glanced up into my companion's face, the smile died upon my lips; for if love and sorrow ever looked out of mortal eyes, they were looking then from the dark, beautiful eyes of Hugh Creveland.

"Eva—Miss Hamilton—I want to ask you a question," he said. He paused a moment, and then went on rapidly. "Suppose you were a captive, shut up in a gloomy cell, chained down with heavy chains, which you could not break; no matter who forged the chains, whether it were yourself or another. If you were in that gloomy dungeon, no

sunshine, no bloom, no beauty to bless your life, if, in your gloom and despair, a little bird should come and sit in the narrow slit in the wall above you, and sing sweet songs to you—a little innocent bird, with heaven's own sunshine on its wings—would you reach up there, to where it sat above you, and draw it down into the gloom and danger, gather it to your heart, and try to make your own love take the place to it of the freedom it had lost, of the sweet air of heaven it must resign for your sake? Would you? Would it be too selfish?"

I looked up at him, wonderingly. He was gazing down upon me with a strange expression, inexpressibly sad, and laid his hand lightly upon my head.

"You don't answer, and you look half-frightened; and I'll tell you what I think," said he, with his tone suddenly changing. "I think he would be a wretch, a selfish villain. And now, mavourneen, I want you to sing to me. Sing to me about the brave knight of Normandy, who left his sweetheart and his native land for the battle-field, and died, shouting victory."

AND SO HE DISAPPEARED.

He went and stood in the open hall-door, and I sat down to the piano and commenced singing. I had often sang to him this old Eng-

lish ballad. But now, before I had sung even the first verse through, I saw him, from the open window, walking with long strides through the gate into the park; and so he disappeared.

When Auntie discovered he was gone, she was indignant. "Here it is one o'clock," said she, "and dinner most ready, and everything doing so splendid. It is a shame and a disgrace."

I did not tell her of his strange talk to me; but I joined with her in saying, that his conduct was "extremely strange."

"Strange? I should say strange! Who ever saw a man that wasn't strange?" No description can do justice to her scornful emphasis on the word man; and her face showed all the depth of contempt she felt, as she added, "There haint no more dependence on any of the race than there is in my old clock." And while she was speaking, as if to add force to her illustration, the timepiece struck nearly a hundred.

And yet it was strange that his sudden, singular way of leaving, his absence did not cause me disquiet. I was not at all unhappy. In fact, it seemed as if some weight had been lifted from my heart, as if I could breathe more easily.

It was in the third week after Mr. Creveland's departure that Auntie took a severe cold, and one day was obliged to keep her bed the most of the day. She wouldn't let me stay at home. She said it was nothing but a cold, and she should get better soon. But when I returned from my school in the afternoon, I found her apparently worse. There was a certain herb, however, that grew on the banks of the lake in Creveland Park, that she professed to have some faith in; and so I offered at once to go and get some of it. It grew near the edge of the lake; and after I had gathered my little basketful of it I ought to have returned directly; but the blue, placid water, shining so serenely through the green leaves and boughs, persuaded me to stay, and I went down to the border of the lake to gather some of the lovely ferns that grew in such rich profusion.

There was a great gnarled stump hanging over the water. On the very outmost edge of it was a cluster of the most delicate and exquisite ferns, like dainty emerald feathers. That bunch, I thought, I must have. I stepped out confidently, and was stooping down to pick it, when suddenly, without any warning, the root fell with me, and I sank

I FELT MYSELF LIFTED UP.

into the deep waters below me. But, as I fell, I gave a wild cry, that rang through the silent woods.

"Claude! Claude!" was my exclamation.

Why did I not call upon my hero, my mysterious friend? But no! At that moment, when I was facing death, it seemed to me as if all my hope on earth was in Claude.

Suddenly I felt myself lifted up in a strong arm, and heard a voice speaking courage to me. But I heard only the first tones, for at the sudden transition from death to life, I fainted.

When I recovered consciousness, I was lying on the green shore, and Hugh Creveland was kneeling beside me, chafing my cold fingers. As I looked up at him and tried to speak, he took me in his arms, as if I were a baby, and strode on toward Auntie's with long steps. I looked up in his face rather timidly.

"I have saved your life, little one," he said. "Don't you think I ought to have some claim upon it now? Don't you, in a way, belong to me in the future?"

I was terribly agitated and confused, I know, and I could think of nothing better to say than to ask him to put me down, and let me walk.

"You couldn't lift your hand to your head a minute ago," he said. "Keep still. What do you suppose Miss Cobb will say? She will admit hereafter that I have 'my properties,' will she not?"

But I insisted upon trying to walk. And seeing that it really troubled me, he let me have my way. At first, I was obliged to lean heavily upon his arm, for my head felt very weak and giddy. We walked a short distance in silence, and then Mr. Creveland said:

"I haven't been to your house for some time, have I? Not since that day I called for the song about the brave knight, who gave his life and died shouting for victory. When I left you, I meant to stay away from you, like a good villain. But to-day, as I was taking leave of the Hall for a while, as fate, or luck, or chance would have it, I thought, while the carriage went round the road as far as Miss Cobb's, I would take this short route through the park, and stop there and bid you good-bye. I supposed it was the fiend that prompted me, as usual, he having the guardianship of my affairs generally. But I must have been mistaken; it must have been an angel. I believe in omens; and this must be a good one, is it not? For I have saved your precious life. Do you know it, little one? And when I think those sweet brown eyes would never have opened again in the world had it not been for me, surely they must look kindly upon me in the future, will they not?"

I assured him that "they would; that I should always regard him kindly." Not without tears, for I felt weak and nervous. But he would not listen to any thanks for what he had done. And just then we came out by Auntie's, and saw Mr. Creveland's carriage standing by the gate. He went with me to the door, and looking down upon the water-soaked garments, said "he thought he would drive back home for a few moments, to make himself a little more presentable." And bidding me good-bye, and telling me to make haste to put myself in Miss Cobb's kind hands at once, and leaving his good wishes for her, he sprang into his carriage, and was driven back to the Hall.

Auntie, forgetting her own indisposition, seemed to think I was in imminent danger. So I was put to bed, in close companionship with hot bricks and flat-irons, while my throat was smarting under the effects of hot ginger and pepper tea.

I remember thinking, as I dropped off into sleep, how much it was like one of my romances; that my mysterious hero had actually rescued me from death, and that I owed my life to him.

But still, I recollect that I thought a great deal more — in fact, it was my last thought before I went to sleep, "of what Claude would say when I told him how nearly I had met my death, and how terrible it would have been if I had died there, without seeing him once more."

It was about a week after Mr. Creveland left the Hall, that I received a surprise. It was no less than an invitation from the "stony-hearted," to make them a visit.

The letter, however, bore no signs of stony-heartedness. It was warm, cordial, sincere. They professed themselves as extremely anxious to see the young lady, for whom their relative had entertained such a warm regard.

I could not refrain from marveling somewhat, why, after they had been so successful in curbing their anxious desire to see me for over two years, it had, at this late hour, broke forth so overpoweringly.

But their invitation was so pressing, that I did not really know how to refuse it; and as I had a long vacation at that time, there was really no reason for my refusing.

My fine gowns, for which I had no use during my stay at Auntie's, needed only a little making over to do nicely. I told Auntie the change would do me good, and she heartily agreed with me, and so, also, did Mr. Capelin, who had dropped in to try to borrow a fanning-mill. I said I would be glad to see my old home once more, and I really had a strong curiosity to see the "stony-hearted." I gave a great number of reasons why I wanted to make the visit, but I never chanced to mention what I know I thought, the first thing in the morning, and the last at night, that I would see Claude again. I said to myself, that this desire was only natural, for perhaps I could influence him not to work too hard. Perhaps he was getting into bad habits. I thought I would like, above all things, to be a sort of maternal guardian angel to him; for if he were my own boy, I could not be more anxious to have him do well. I invariably ended my reveries in this way.

But there was no need of any apprehension concerning him. I found him grown so manly and self-possessed, that, instead of my being a protector to him, it seemed more natural that he should protect me. I could hardly, at first, realize the change. I felt that it would be a misnomer to call him my boy any longer. And he was respected and beloved by all, even by the "stony-hearted," who, I discovered, was not stony-hearted at all, only a very good-natured business man, much given to gay society and pleasure. His wife was a gentle, inoffensive little woman, and they both seemed glad to see me.

There was not much of the looks of my old home, I found; it was much gayer and grander. They had a great deal of company, and went much into society. But, after all, Mrs. Lansing had a way of making the house seem home-like and pleasant, and I enjoyed

myself quite well. I had not been there long, before I discovered that I owed my invitation to visit them, to Mr. Creveland, who was a great friend of theirs. He boarded at a hotel in the place.

It was due to his influence, also, I found, that Claude was made so much at home there. How very good he was to Claude! It really warmed my heart to him. I said to myself, I had no idea there was so much goodness in human nature. Mr. Creveland came often to visit me. After a time, I could see that he fought no more against his liking for me. His pride, as I thought it was, that had stood in the way of his love, yielded at last to his passion. He became more devoted every day.

And I saw that all my ambitious dreams and desires were likely to be realized, that I was in a fair way of being a rich man's wife — just my ideal, too, a mysterious, erratic lover, in truth, he was — mistress of Creveland Hall. Why, I had thought that just to be mistress of that grand old mansion, would make perfect bliss; and so, of course, I was happy. I remember assuring myself often that I was very happy, indeed.

Claude came to see me often at first. But after a while he did not come so much; he was too busy, he said. I told him he was killing himself with hard work, and his pale face showed it. But what a brave, honest face it was! And it grew still more manly and noble every day. But he was evidently working too hard. What with his regular studies, and his study of the law out of school-hours, it pained me to see it. But I never thought to wonder why it was. I never asked why even the lightest fancy that he was ill, or suffering in any way, sent such a pang to my heart. Why, when Mr. Creveland was my hero, the very personification of my romantic visions, the thought of his danger, which the doctor still prophesied, I could endure calmly, while the thought of Claude's suffering seemed to me harder than to suffer myself.

But Claude laughed at my anxious face, and my sage advice. He said he was all right, that he was getting along splendidly; that by the time he left college, he should have a very good knowledge of the law; should have to spend only a short time in the law office, so Mr. Lansing told him.

"And then," said he to me, one evening, as we chanced to be alone for a few minutes, "then I shall have all the world before me. I suppose by that time you will be my Lady Creveland."

I said nothing, either to deny it, or acknowledge it; and Claude was silent for a moment, while his blue eyes looked searchingly, but very sadly, into mine, and then he added: —

"Yes, you will be a grand lady, and I — I shall be a poor man, lonely and hard-working. And being rather a soft-hearted fellow, who would love a happy home, why, I shall probably be looking for the little blue-eyed maiden that you used to advise me to wait for."

"What is the use of being so extremely foolish, Claude?" said I, with unnecessary tartness.

"Why, it was your own advice, Eva ——"

"I can see no good reason for your recalling every idiotic thing I may have said in the past. Life has nobler and wiser duties to perform than searching for eyes of different colors." And I remember I talked considerably, and very seriously, to him concerning life, its duties and responsibilities. It was not a very long lecture, however, for Mrs. Lansing, coming in, interrupted our conversation.

Knowing Mr. Creveland's restless, unquiet nature so well, it did not surprise me so much, when, after I had been at Mrs. Lansing's about five weeks, he should be overtaken with one of his dissatisfied, restless moods, and finally should go away suddenly and abruptly, leaving no word where he was going, or when he was coming back.

Good-natured Mrs. Lansing rallied me a little, on the sudden absence of my admirer. But she, although comparatively a new

acquaintance, was familiar with his erratic ways, and said he would probably return as suddenly as he went.

But I found life, notwithstanding his absence, very pleasant and delightful. There was a constant succession of boat-rides, picnics, croquet, and evening parties; and I found I could enjoy them all; for Claude always went when I did.

Mr. Creveland had been gone just one week, when I rose, one morning, with a severe headache, and so was unable to go to a picnic that we had planned for that day. I made Mrs. Lansing go, however, telling her all I needed was rest, and that a good sleep would make my head feel as well as ever. It did; for in the afternoon I woke up entirely refreshed.

The afternoon was nearly gone, and I stood by a window, looking dreamily out, listening to the murmur of the fountain in the yard below, when I heard a quick step in the hall, and in a moment a servant ushered Mr. Creveland into my presence. He had returned, it seemed, as suddenly, and abruptly, as he had gone. He came directly up to me, and took one of my hands in both of his own, saying: —

"Are you glad to see me?"

I, of course, said some polite, commonplace words; but, as I did so, I looked up in his face. The old unquiet, restless look was gone, and its place was one of stern resolve. He still held my hand, and his grasp was almost painful.

"Shall I tell you what I have come back for?" he said; and without waiting for an answer, he went on. "I have come back for you, little one. I tried to run away, not from you, but from myself, from fate. But your sweet, brown eyes have been stronger than my will. They have drawn me back to you, little one. Will you come to me? Can I make you happy? I love you, I love you."

Surely, this was all I had dreamed of, had hoped for. To be

mistress of Creveland Hall, the chosen one of my romantic, mysterious lover! Why, then, did my heart sink down so low at the thought of that grand future? Sink so low, as his trembling voice went on:—

"My life has been full of fancies, but for the first time I love passionately, with all my strength and heart. No woman was ever to me what you are, so pure, so unworldly, so innocent. I am not like you, God knows; but your sweet love shall make me better. This little hand," and he raised it to his lips, and kissed it, "this dear hand shall rule me at will."

It was all coming true, then, all the old dream. And my hand was the one destined to guide him, save him. How I had dreamed of this! And in my vision it had been such a delightful and satisfactory task. Why, then, did it seem suddenly so utterly distasteful and impossible? I withdrew my hand from his, and turning away, looked out into the gathering shadows. I suppose my silence gave him hope. He thought I was too shy to speak, to look at him.

"Tell, me, Eva, could you love me well enough to leave home and country for my sake? To let me be all the world to you, as you would be to me? Will you be my own, my beauty, my darling?"

Afterwards, I remembered that he did not say the word wife to me, but I did not notice it at the time. He took my hands in his again, very tenderly.

"If you will consent to bless my life with your sweet presence, everything that wealth can give you shall be yours," he said. "There are lovelier lands than this, my darling. We will leave this dull, wretched country; I hate it all. We will go to some brighter clime, and there be happy."

I thought of Creveland Hall, and its stately beauty and magnificence; and I said, almost without thought that I was thinking aloud:—

"There can be no place lovelier than Creveland Hall."

"I hate Creveland Hall!" said he, with a sudden frown. But his tone softened again immediately.

"You shall live there, after a time, if you like. You shall choose your own home, my beauty. You shall be queen, and I will be your slave."

Smooth, and fair, and rosy, stretched the path before me. The door of my Spanish castle stood open. What was it that barred my entrance? What was dearer to me than grandeur or glory? A form stood before me that would not let me pass. Now that I was free to choose, now that the moment had come that I must choose my future, I well knew that one curl of Claude's brown hair was dearer to me than all the world beside.

Mr. Creveland was looking into my face intently. I could never hide my emotions.

"Tell me; I can bear it. Tell me, for God's sake! Is it that you can't love me?"

My tears were falling now, partly in pity for the pain in his face; partly, I think, for my old dreams of splendor and glory, that were vanishing.

"Do you love some one else? Tell me the truth."

"I—I am afraid—I think I do."

"Who is it?"

His look always compelled my obedience.

"Claude. Claude Richards."

He looked at me silently, with a look I never saw on his face, as changeable as it always was. Then he said, sternly, more as if he was questioning time and eternity, than me:—

"Do you believe in retribution? Do you believe in these old words, 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord?' I do. If you ever hear them doubted again by any one, tell them there was one man who believed them to be truth, knew them to be true as sorrow."

He clasped me for a moment in his arms, and I felt his hot breath, his kisses on my face; and then he almost threw me from him, and left the room and the house.

And so my one grand lover vanished, and the walls of my ideal castle fell into ruins. I passed slowly into the garden, and stood, listening to the dreamy murmur of the fountain, and thinking of Claude, when suddenly I heard a step beside me, and looking up, I saw the visible reality of my thoughts standing there before me.

"I found the doors all open, so I walked in," he said.

I made no reply. I only smiled upon his face. It was so delightful to see him again; to look into his clear, honest eyes, that held no mystery or remorse; to meet his warm, true hand-clasp; and to know that nothing separated us now, if he willed it so. But his blue eyes looked rather sad and weary to-night.

"Mr. Creveland has returned, it seems. I met him by the gate," he said.

"Yes; he has just gone from here."

"Is it true, then, Eva, what every one says?" he asked, with a trembling voice.

"He has asked me to marry him."

He did not speak.

"You are his friend, Claude. Tell me, would you accept him?"

Suddenly he let go my hand, which he had held till then.

"He has been good to me. I can't advise you."

I could not bear the pain in his voice, in his honest eyes.

"I have refused him," I cried. "Can you guess the reason?"

How his face lit up! He caught my hands again in his.

"I refused him, because I love somebody else."

His lips were very near my face, as he whispered his next words, too dear, too sacred to repeat.

We stood there a long while in the sweet moonlight, as ridiculously hopeful and happy as love and poverty could make us. We made great plans for the future, or he did, for I had quite lost my old flow of eloquence, and preferred listening to him to speaking. We should be poor, of course, at first. But our little home should hold such happiness, such rest, such sweet content. He whispered how he would care for me, would shield me, work for me. And though he had no wealth to offer me, surely such a true love as his must bring a blessing down from on high. But as for me, I thought if I could only be with him, and make him happy, it would be happiness enough for me.

After he had left me, I went up into my room, a happy woman, although I had just renounced a fortune, and pledged myself to a life of poverty and privation. Mrs. Lansing had not come yet, but I expected her every minute. And it was time to dress for their late dinner. But as I was entering my room, a servant handed me a letter that had just come for me. In

WE STOOD IN THE STREET MOONLIGHT.

that letter was a strange revelation that drove all other thoughts out of my head. It was from Auntie, and exceedingly lengthy, as all of her epistles were. It seemed to be written in great excitement, and read as follows:

"My Dear Girl:

"As I have heerd tell, it comin' right straight to me from them that wont lie, that a villain, that shan't be named between us two, made his black soul blacker than it was before, by tryin' like a black wolf to devour a helpless lamb, that I needn't mention the name of. This is to tell you to shun him as you would a SERPIENT."

This word was written in larger letters than any of the rest of the letter. It was underscored deeply, and spelled just as she would have pronounced it, "serpient." I know it impressed me much more deeply than it would had it been spelt in the usual way.

"Shun him as you would a serpient, whose bite means death. It has all come to light, all his villainy unexpected. She bein' took half-crazy with the shock of heerin' of it, and most dead every way. The gardner come after me in the dead of night. And she let it all out to me. And she is his lawful wife, and lays at the pint of death; and Miss Richards'es boy is Hugh Creveland's own son. He married her at college, a poor girl just over from England, with nothing but her beauty and principles, that he couldn't overthrow and trample under. So he married her, but made her swear not to tell, kept her hid in a little cottage out in the country, where none of his friends ever mistrusted her ont. But afterward, when Claude was a little fellow, he made her think it was a sham marriage. And she a livin', crushed down under the idee all her days, but still a lovin' the scamp so well that she come here as his housekeeper, a pretendin' to be a widow, jest to run the chance of seein' of him now and then. But lately, only a few days ago, she come across some papers that proved the hull thing out, letters from the minister that married 'em, a friend of his then. And after ruinin' her hull life, agonizin' her with thoughts of her false marriage, and chasin' after other women promiscous, and never darin' to marry any girl outright — the shame-faced black villain — she worships the very ground he walks on, which I can't help callin' her a natural fool, though, as I say, she lays at the pint of death, and the boy been wrote to to-day by the doctor, to come home quick if he wants to see her alive, and that *serpient* wrote to by the same; though there would be but a precious few letters writ to him on the subject if there wasn't but one woman in the world to write 'em, as I told Mr. Capelin, jest now, who happened in to borrow a wagon exeltry. (How did he suppose

I would have a exeltry?) But he agreed with me about the serpient, though he says the letter wont give him much comfort, for he presumed the doctor give it to him up and down, bein' so worked up by seein' that dyin' woman. And now I will end this epistol by warnin' of you again — though, probable, after you read this, there wont be no need of it — if you value your own soul's salvation in this world, or in any other world whatsumever, to *shun that serpient!* And if you want to make me happy as a queen on her throne, come home here to once. When I can lay my hands on your pretty head, I shall feel safer about you. And let me once get you here, and then let that wolf, that *serpient* come anear, if he dares, the house of

"Yours truly,

"PRISCILLA A. COBB."

That night I received a hasty note from Claude, enclosing the letter the doctor had written him, and saying he had just time to catch the train for home. But, with all his haste, he did not get there in time to see his mother alive. He arrived in the morning, and she died at midnight. The patient heart was still, the only true, faithful heart that Hugh Creveland had ever known, and yet had scorned. She left many loving messages for Claude; said she was willing to die; but, being a timid, shrinking little woman, she said she was afraid to go alone. The doctor thought her mind was wandering, she asked him so many strange questions: "What should she see first after she closed her eyes here? Would she be afraid? Would He meet her—the Gentle One, the Saviour of sinners? Would she see Him alone, or would there be a great crowd for her to enter alone? She was afraid. How could she go alone?"

The doctor soothed her as well as he could. "She was delirious," he whispered to Auntie, who told me all this afterward. But it was just at midnight that she looked up and smiled pleasantly, and said, as if greeting a fellow-voyager:

"Why, Hugh!"

And so she died with a smile on her lips.

The strangest part of my story remains to be told. The morning after her death, a servant, at the hotel where Mr. Creveland was stay-

ing, tried to enter his room, but could not. They knocked repeatedly, but could get no reply. Finally, becoming alarmed, they forced the door, and found him lying on the bed, quite dead. The doctor said he had probably died about midnight. The letter from the doctor at Coldbrook, filled with reproaches for his villainy, which was unmasked at last, lay on the stand by his bed, and by it was a little bottle containing laudanum. Excited and agitated as he must have been by the contents of the letter, he might only have taken enough to ensure a night's sleep; he might have taken enough to ensure the longer, quieter sleep. No one knew, or will ever know. No one could say with certainty that he had committed suicide; and the doctor who attended him at Auntie's testified that he had been liable to die suddenly any time since his fall from the horse. It was a mystery that could never be solved. But the two lives, so strangely blent together here, went out together to meet the Unknown, to meet the strange mystery of the hereafter.

He was buried in the vault of the Gray Stone church, at the western extremity of Creveland Park, where so many of the Crevelands sleep. And beside the tablet, on which is written his name and age, is another, bearing this inscription:

EDITH RICHARDS CREVELAND

WIFE OF HUGH CREVELAND.

Requiescat In Pace.

I did as Auntie directed me to do in her letter. I went home that week, although Mr. and Mrs. Lansing seemed loth to have me leave, and urged me again to return soon, with a kindness that touched my heart. But the awfulness of the terrible tragedy, for so it seemed to me, of these two sudden deaths, made me nearly sick, and I longed for home.

Claude had written me a hasty note the day after his mother's death. It was but a few words, for I could see he was half wild with the shock and with the added excitement of the strange story. He

urged me to come home as soon as possible, for he said he "should feel that he was alone in the world, if it were not for me."

It was at noon, on the day after the double funeral, that I reached Auntie's. She saw me come through the gate, and hurried down the flower-bordered path to meet me, greeting me with more tenderness than I had ever known her to show before. Something had softened her wonderfully.

She did not call Mr. Creveland a "*serpient*" once, although I told her all, in answer to her earnest inquiries. But I did not like to talk of this; for, when I thought of the irreparable injury he was meditating toward me, my heart grew like ice, and I marveled at the strange power of love, that had caused another woman, whose whole life he had laid waste, to worship him to the last. Surely, there must have been some good in him, or she could not have done this, I said.

Auntie told me of the last hours and the death of Mrs. Richards, or Mrs. Creveland, as we constantly forgot to call her. And she talked much about Claude, how good and noble he had appeared through it all. But she said he was just about sick, and she must go over and see him right away after dinner. And then — for I thought it would be wrong to conceal anything from so kind a friend — I told her of my engagement to Claude. Her delight at this was unbounded. She was usually very undemonstrative; but now she rose up, and flung her arms around my neck, and kissed me on both cheeks.

"If I could have made a feller with my own hands," she said, "and all his surroundings and worldly habits, I couldn't have fixed on one to suit me any neater for you than Claude. Why, he suited to a T." "T" was always her strongest expression of satisfaction with anything. No one, by any combination of fortunate circumstances, could ever hope to rise higher in her estimation than to a "T."

Auntie's unqualified approbation, and her warm praises of Claude, would have given me great delight, had she stopped there. But she

could not cease talking about it; and at the dinner-table she would constantly commence breaking out in strong expressions of intense satisfaction, and then, glancing at Jane, would cease instantly, with the effect of driving Jane nearly wild with curiosity. And after Jane had left the room, she commenced again, instantly:

"To think that my little girl, that I have always loved so well, should make such a match! Why, Claude Richards—or Claude Creveland, I mean—will be as rich as a Jew. He could take his pick amongst the richest in the land. There haint a girl in the country, amongst the richest and the grandest, but what would jump at the chance of marrying him. And to think that my little girl should be mistress of Creveland Hall! Why, it is almost too good to believe!"

But these words of Auntie's, although intended to give me delight, filled me with a vague disquiet. We had seemed so near to each other, he had seemed so much like a part of my own life, that the thought of his wealth had not appeared like any possible barrier between us. But now—now Auntie's words had wakened strange fears, vague distrust.

But my thoughts were interrupted by Auntie's next words, delivered with an exceedingly embarrassed and conscious manner.

"I have got something myself that I may as well tell you first as last," she said.

I told her I was all attention, and should be glad to listen to "anything that interested her."

"Wall, then," said she, "come out with me to feed the corset."

It was an invincible habit of Auntie's to feed "the corset" immediately after her own dinner, and neither joyful nor sorrowful events were sufficient to break up this long-established usage. I put on my garden-hat, hanging, as usual, in its accustomed place by the back door, and Auntie, taking her little pail of milk in her hand, put on her sun-bonnet, pulling it further, I thought, over her face than I had ever

known her to. We walked along in silence for a few minutes, and then she broke out suddenly:

"I may as well tell you, first as last—"

Here she stopped abruptly, and tried, but vainly, to pull the sun-bonnet over her face a little further. Three times she got as far in her story as this, and stopped. But at last she said, with her face perfectly invisible, and her voice coming from the depths of gingham:

"You have got to know it, and I may as well tell you, first as last. *He* brought the news to me—Mr. Capelin, you know—of Mr. Creveland's death; and knowing that she lay dead, too, up to the Hall, everything seemed so awful and lonesome, that he—I mean—that I— You know, it was on the age of the evenin', a thunder-storm a comin' up—everything seemed so dretful and mysterious, and kinder loose and uncertain like— My old clock struck forty right there at the time. Everything seemed so curious and awful like, that—"

Here she stopped suddenly again, and I saw that she would never get the words out. But the spirit of prophecy was upon me, and I took up her dropped burden of speech.

"You felt that you were alone, in a great, cold, uncertain world; and when a good man offered you the rest and protection of an honest love, you accepted it."

The sun-bonnet never wavered in the least from its direct line of straightforwardness, but a voice came from the depths again:

"Yes, something like that." And then, in rather an apologetic tone, she continued:

"And I, a bein' wore out with his traipsin' here, day after day, a makin' errents, tryin' to borrow everything under the sun and moon, and things no earthly woman ever hearn of—"

I grasped her hands, and invaded the sun-bonnet to kiss her warmly.

"You have my best wishes, Auntie. I know you will be happy. He is one of the best men I ever knew."

"He has his properties."

Her tone was cool as usual, but her returning kisses were warm. We had reached the lane by this time, and Auntie commenced talking about the "corset," and her "garding," and other secular matters, and said no more about Mr. Capelin; but I could see the light of a new happiness in her eyes.

Later, I learned what his errand had been to Auntie's, when he finally persuaded her to cease being "balky" and "shying off." It was to borrow an iron instrument to remove stones and landmarks. I think Auntie called it a "hand-speak."

After we returned to the house, Auntie proceeded to carry out the plan she had spoken of. She excused herself for leaving me so soon, but said "she had laid out to go over there that afternoon, for she was afraid Claude was going to be bed-sick."

I told her to go by all means, and I would like to send a little note to him; and she, of course, was delighted to take it. I had not answered his letter to me, for, by some delay, it had only reached me the day before I came home. But now I wrote him how earnestly and sincerely my sympathy was with him in his trouble. But I added, I could not wait a moment without telling him the thoughts that Auntie's words had aroused in my mind. I told him, that when he offered himself to me we were both poor, equals in hopeful and loving poverty. But now we were not equals; I was poor, and he was rich. And he could now, if he so desired, form a connection with the highest and proudest in the land, and therefore he was free. And, whatever course he took, he "might be sure I would never blame him, but should always, as now, hold him in tender and loving remembrance."

And what answer did I receive to these words, written earnestly and sincerely, I know, but not without tears?

I was in the garden, trying to forget it all, seeking forgetfulness in occupation. I was tying up my roses. The traces of tears were still

on my face, when I heard a quick step behind me, and, looking up, I saw, what has blessed me all my years since, Claude's true, faithful eyes, full of love and tenderness.

The Hall has been remodeled into a perfect bower of beauty, and there are two little restless forms that flit through the winding galleries and make the lofty rooms ring with their gay voices, almost startling, I am afraid, the grim knights in armor with their happy laughter. There is another picture hanging now by the side of Hugh Creveland's. Not the white-faced, gloomy woman that we remembered, but a bright, beauliful, girlish face, painted from an ivory miniature that Claude found in Mr. Creveland's desk. Little Edith will tell strangers:

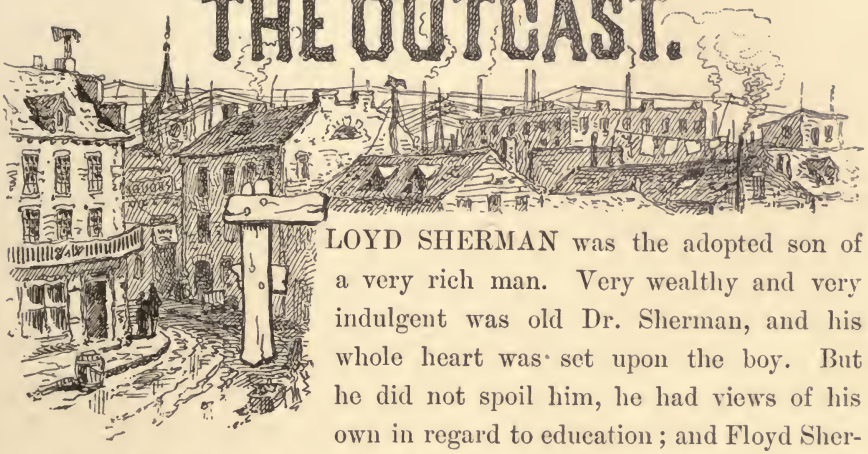
"That is my own grandma, that I was named for."

Auntie Capelin is the children's special delight. To spend a day with her, to be petted by her and her husband and the faithful Jane, who still lives with her, is happiness enough for them. Auntie is hale and happy, and makes a cozy, comfortable home for her husband. And he, out of the depths of his content, still, as of old, finds food for philosophical reflection. Whenever I see him, he never fails to say to me, in a confidential tone:

"Curious, haint it? Who'd think, to see her now, drawin' so stiddy in the harness, movin' right straight along, straight as a string, and happy as you please — who would ever suppose that she used to shy off so and be so balky? Curious!"

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN?"

THE OUTCAST.



FLOYD SHERMAN was the adopted son of a very rich man. Very wealthy and very indulgent was old Dr. Sherman, and his whole heart was set upon the boy. But he did not spoil him, he had views of his own in regard to education; and Floyd Sherman early learned that he must rely upon himself. His adopted father while Floyd was yet a child left his native town and moved to a large Eastern city, where he acquired a large fortune. He lived long enough to prove that his plan was a success. He saw the boy grow up a noble man, honored and respected by all; then he died and left his large fortune to his dear child, who used it well and wisely.

For young Dr. Sherman, taught by the precepts and example of his benefactor, looked upon the poor and wretched as those God had left to the care of His more successful and happy children. He thought the strong ought to bear the burdens of the weak. He looked upon his great wealth as a talent God had given him on trust, not to be used solely for his own gratification and glory, but as a loan for which he would surely have to give an account to its real owner.

Not an ascetic was he by any means. He did not think that the kind All-Father would have placed so much beauty in His children's pathway below, if it were wrong for them to enjoy it. He had a beautiful home, filled with treasures of art. He was indeed a very happy man, as I think one can hardly fail to be who lives a full, complete life, in all the higher, nobler range of his faculties.

This fortunate doctor had won, too, the sweetest maiden in all the country for his promised wife. Maud Willoughby was a beauty and an heiress; but Dr. Sherman had borne her off triumphantly from a crowd of suitors, and he considered himself a very happy and fortunate man in so doing; for he knew the loveliness of her soul far transcended the beauty of her face. She was, in truth, a very noble and lovely woman, sympathizing with him fully in all his nobler aims and pursuits. She was to him what I think every woman should be to the man she loves, a blessing and an inspiration.

It was a very pleasant evening in September. Maud Willoughby had been to spend the evening with an aunt, and Dr. Sherman, chancing to call there at just the right time, was walking home with her under the pleasant starlight. It was not a long walk to them, I will warrant, for they were talking of their future—they were to be married in December. Their minds were full of life and happiness—certainly death had no part in their thoughts.

But as they crossed the stone-bridge that spanned the river, no other passenger being in sight at the time, they came suddenly upon a woman, who, but for Dr. Sherman's strong arm, would have "rashly importunate, gone to her death." She was evidently just preparing to leap from the low side of the bridge, when they caught sight of her, and dropping his companion's arm, Dr. Sherman rushed forward, and, with one of his impetuous movements, he drew her back so suddenly that her head struck against the stone-work, making a small gash from which the blood started.

"What do you mean?" he asked, rather roughly, in his excitement, as he raised her to an upright position upon the ground where she had fallen.

"I mean to die," answered the woman; and as her tattered hood fell back, it revealed a face, once beautiful, of a woman of about fifty, but now haggard, wasted, looking like the face of the dying.

"What right have you to throw away your life in this manner?"

"What right have you to save it?" said the woman, trying to wipe the blood from her forehead with her ragged shawl.

Just at this moment Maud came up, and the sight of the cowering form, bending with sorrow and guilt, the pale face, from which the blood was streaming, was too much for her tender, womanly little heart; and with tears starting in her blue eyes, she said:

"Poor woman, I am so sorry for you."

At these words of sympathy and compassion, perhaps the first she had heard since she had need of them, the stolid, hardened look of the woman's face melted into one of suffering. And as Maud bent down, in her gentle compassion, and laid her soft, white hand upon the poor bruised head, the woman lifted her eyes to the pitiful, sweet face, and then covering her own distorted features with her hands, she burst into a passion of tears and sobs that shook her like a tempest, in which one might read hopelessness for the present, despair for the future, remorse for the evil-doing that had ruined her, regret, oh! such deep and poignant regret for the lost purity and innocence that were once hers, but lost to her now—lost to her forever.

I think the good angel of this woman—who must have wept over her, if angels ever weep—smiled as those tears flowed faster and faster; for is it not in such remorseful tears that our soul-stains are washed away, and become less scarlet?

O ye philanthropists, who regard the suffering mass of blackened humanity surging beneath you as a turbid tide, to be checked and

turned back by loud words of righteous indignation; ye who scatter from barred and inaccessible palace windows, largess of glittering words of wisdom to be scrambled for by the crowd beneath; ye who fit coats of advice of excellent warp and woof to the shivering backs of sinners, to be given on application; ye who drop religious tracts from gloved fingers, "The Beauties of the Heavenly Home," on the bare floor of hovels; or "Food for the Sick Soul," to be taken on an empty stomach; ye whose words of rebuke and denunciation have been like a whirlwind and a devouring flame, how many hearts have you melted by your wholesale method of reformation? How many tears have you caused to gush, like this woman's, with remorse and repentance? Lo! here they flow, not by words of rebuke and warning, but by the touch of a pitying hand upon the poor sinful head; by a word of true sympathy coming from a heart full of tenderness and compassion for all of God's suffering creatures, but most of all, for His erring ones.

"Where is your home?" asked Dr. Sherman, at last.

"Home!" sobbed the woman, "if I had a home, should I be here?"

"Well, you must stay somewhere. If you will tell me where you live, after I have taken this lady home, I will come back and go with you. I don't think you are fit to go alone."

"I can go alone," said she, rising to her feet, and drawing her thin shawl round her shoulders.

But as she stood up, she reeled and almost fell, and was obliged to sit down again.

"I am afraid you are very ill," said Maud. "I will come and see you to-morrow, if you will tell me where."

The woman named one of the lowest localities in the city.

"You will stay here till I come back?" said Dr. Sherman.

The woman bowed silently. Another mistake here, oh! ye whole-

sale reformers. He should not have taken her word without exacting an oath, and even then he should have shown in his countenance,

THE OUTCAST.

and in his words, how entirely he distrusted her; for it is in such a warm genial atmosphere that truth, that heavenly exotic, blossoms most beauteously. But Dr. Sherman did not seem to doubt her, for he turned silently to his companion and offered his arm.

Mr. Willoughby's house was only just round the corner, and he returned quickly, and found the woman sitting there in the same old place.

"Now I will go with you," said he.

She rose to her feet, but as she did so, she tottered, and almost fell.

"Take my arm," said Dr. Sherman.

The woman gave him a wondering glance, but obeyed, and laid her hand, defiled by the clasp of sin, where the white hand of Maud Willoughby had so lately been.

I think it was with a thrill of repulsion that Dr. Sherman gave this a passing thought, as he felt the outcast's shrinking touch upon his arm. But he certainly gave no outward manifestation of it; and the strangely-assorted couple wended their way down the street, past

splendid mansions with brown-stone walls facing the avenue — walls that men had built high, and thick, and strong, to fence out the black wolves of the street from the white lambs within. Not high enough, nor strong enough, oh, ye rich men! Past churches, where priestly hands are raised in benediction over the kneeling worshipers; wherein response to the intoned expostulation, "Let your light so shine before men," bounteous amounts are subscribed for the heathen, haply wandering under his native palm-trees, over tropical vegetation, warmer and softer to bare feet than the icy pavements of our American cities; where eloquent words of admonition and consolation are addressed to the poor, whom the Lord left as a legacy of care to his disciples. Not loud enough, oh, ye Christian teachers! The eloquent words beaten back by the frescoed walls, die down the long arches, or float upward with the organ notes, the "*Dies Iræ*" the "Be pitiful, oh God." Down from the broad, clean streets, into narrower ways of respectable poverty; down, down, down where the streets are reeking and filthy with decaying vegetables and *debris* of all kinds; where the gaping houses leaned over the narrow streets with shutterless, broken windows, as if clamoring to tell their wild secrets of and horror to the

STRANGE COMPANIONS.

respectable stranger passing beneath; where the air crime, and want, was putrid, as if reeking with moral miasma as well as physical. Oh, ye rich men, what chance would one of your white lambs have here, to keep itself white?

They turned, finally, round the corner of a tall tenement-house into a deep alley, where the bright moonlight fought with mysterious shadows. Here the woman paused, and opened a door. As she did so, a current of cold, almost icy air struck Dr. Sherman, as if from a charnel house. He had a little pocket-lantern, and this he lit, looking round the bare room.

"My God!" he cried, "can a human being call this home?"

We read of the sufferings of the poor in our great cities, as we do of desert siroccos, or northern glaciers and avalanches; something with which we have nothing to do, only to feel a sort of mild compassion. Dr. Sherman was a follower of Christ. He thought that a dreamy pity, exhausted in compassionate reveries on silken couches and by warm hearth-stones, did not really amount to much. He thought, that if he said to this woman, for instance, "My dear madame, depart in peace; be ye warmed and fed," it was not all that was necessary for her comfort. His old nurse was married now, and kept a small boarding-house in the suburbs of the city; and he knew that for his sake she would take the stranger in, and make her dying hours more comfortable; for with the keen insight of his profession, he knew she had not many days to live. Even while he was thinking of this, the woman sank down upon the bare, broken floor, in a deathly fainting fit.

He took her up and laid her upon the pile of rags and straw that served as a bed; then he took his medicine case out of his pocket and gave her a restorative. After a few minutes she opened her eyes, and as the rays of the lantern fell full upon his face, she sat up and cried hoarsely: —

"Man! man! are you a fiend, that you keep your youth and beauty, while I, — look at me! Look at your work."

"LOOK AT YOUR WORK."

He thought it was only the raving of a momentary delirium, and he said some soothing words to her. But she did not notice them. She looked full in his face, with her large hollow eyes.

"Who are you?"

"I am Dr. Sherman. I found you on the bridge, you know. Here, take some of this cordial."

He was holding it in his hand, and the light fell directly upon a ring that he wore upon his little finger. A peculiar ring, a circle of dusky gold clasping a crescent, formed of three rubies. She looked at it intently.

"Where did you get that ring?"

He thought her mind was wandering still.

"Here, take this cordial," he replied. "I would not talk any more now."

She obeyed him silently, and sank down upon the pile of rags.

Dr. Sherman left her that night in care of an Irish woman, who occupied another part of the tenement, and in the morning he removed her to the boarding house, where the clean, quiet room seemed like a palace to the outcast.

Here Maud Willoughby came often to see her. Dr. Sherman attended her faithfully, and the woman's gratitude and devotion to him seemed boundless; but it was evident that her days were numbered.

One day soon after her removal, she said to the old woman who had charge of her:—"That is a singular ring Dr. Sherman wears."

"Yes," said the old lady; and with the garrulity of old age, she went on to tell a long story of how her master, old Dr. Sherman,—they lived in another city then,—had heard a lad singing under his window, one stormy night; how he adopted the boy; how the only thing of value the child had, was this ring which he wore on a ribbon round his neck, until he got large enough to wear it on his finger.

How the child said that his mother was very sick and had sent him with this ring to find some gentleman who she thought would take care of him if she died. How he could not find him, and had got lost, and wandered around many days before he got back to the place where he left his mother. And when he found the house it was only a ruin, for there had been a fire that had swept over all that part of the city. And how he had wandered about ever since, only keeping himself from starvation by the few pennies that he had earned by singing.

Then she told how Dr. Sherman adopted the child for his own son, and had removed to another city where not a soul knew but what he was the old gentleman's own boy.

And then after pledging her to secrecy, for she vowed it was the first time the story had ever passed her lips, she waxed eloquent over the subject dearest her heart, of the goodness of her young master, his kindness, his generosity.

The woman listened with the hot tears falling fast but unnoticed upon her pillow, for the twilight was enwrapping the room in somber shadow.

At the woman's request, Dr. Sherman and Maud read to her often from the Bible, the sweet Psalms of David, and the prophet's inspired words. But most of all did she love to hear of Him, who renouncing heaven to dwell with sorrowing humanity, went about doing good, patient with a world that rejected him — a world he gave himself for.

She never made any reference to her past life but once, though it was evident from her conversation, that she had received the education of a lady. It was in this way, whenever Dr. Sherman was in her presence, she would gaze up into his face with a look of almost worshipful gratitude, and one day, when she had been looking at him so long and so earnestly, she said to Maud, after he left the room.

"He looks like some one I knew—some one I loved long ago."

Maud did not reply, and the woman went on, speaking as if more to herself than to her.

"Oh, how I loved that man! I had never known what love was when I met him, a poor drudge of a governess. And when he offered love to me—or its poor counterfeit, how could I tell—I followed it whither it led me. Oh, my God, if we could only undo the past!"

Her excitement left her soon in such a deathly state, that Maud alarmed, called in Dr. Sherman, who was still in the next room.

It was the last day, though they had hardly thought her end was so near. She had been very restless through the day, and toward night, as Dr. Sherman bent over her, she looked up into his face with a look of wistfulness, longing, and love, and then she shut her eyes, and turned her face toward the wall, and they heard her murmur:—

"Oh, my boy! if I could only have one kiss from my boy, when I am dying—when I am dying!"

"She is thinking of some child she has lost," whispered Maud.

"Yes," murmured the woman, "a child she has lost."

In a few minutes, Dr. Sherman was called out of the room for awhile. The woman followed him with her eager, hungry gaze, till the door closed on him. Then she said to Maud:—

"You love him?"

"Yes."

"You are to be his wife?"

"Yes, if God spares our lives."

"God bless you both!" and then after a minute, she went on: "Sometime, in the future, as you sit in your happy home, maybe you with a child in your arms, maybe a little boy that looks like him—it would make you happier to have it look like him—just such a noble face, such true, tender eyes—like, yet unlike the eyes I knew, because truer than they were."

"Yes, oh yes." Maud's eyes were softened by the sweet home-picture, while her cheeks were hot with blushes.

"If in that happy home, in your happy hearts, a thought of me, of the poor wanderer, should ever come, how would you think of me?"

"Kindly and tenderly," cried Maud, through her hot tears.

"Yes, kindly and tenderly, that is in both of your hearts; they should never know a regret or a care that I could save them from."

But after a short pause she continued again, for the picture she was drawing of the possible future, seemed to have a strange fascination for her.

"I know you will make him happy. He will work hard, for he is a toiler in life, following his divine Master, going about doing good, in weariness often. But, in your love, in your bright, happy home, he will find his reward, his rest, his happiness. I love to think how peaceful that home will be; no sorrowful memories, no shame, no regret to darken that bright fireside; and if a thought of me, of the poor stranger, should ever come, let it come as a blessing, a benediction. Let the voice of the Christ speak to you through that memory, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these, ye have done it unto me."

Again she paused, and then she inquired, "Is that his Bible?"

"Yes, do you want it?" for she had reached out her gaunt hand for the book.

"Yes, let me take it."

Maud took it from the stand, and handed it to her. The dying woman took it, and held it in her trembling hands.

"He has held it in his hands a great many times?"

"Yes."

"Read it often — read in it often of the Christ — the wonderful, Divine Master he is following?"

"Yes."

She put it on the pillow, and laid her cheek upon it.

"What was it you read me yesterday, in your book, about the sins of the world?"

Maud took up her Prayer Book, and read from the Litany, "Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us."

"Have mercy upon us," repeated the woman.

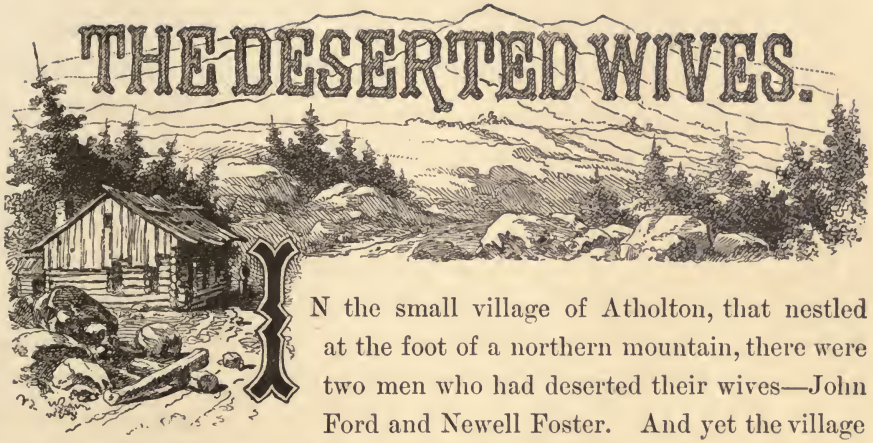
After a time she sunk into a troubled sleep, in which, at first, she murmured fitful words — sometimes of life's weary toils and sorrows, sometimes of childish plays and games. The sleep grew deeper and more quiet, and just as the day was breaking in the east, without a struggle or a change of feature, she passed into the presence of that Judge, who, if He is just, is, well for us poor sinners, merciful also.

THE GOOD BOOK.

Dr. Sherman did not bury her in the Potter's field, but in a quiet corner of the church-yard, and there he raised a white cross over her grave. On it was carved no name, for they knew not her name, but only these words which had seemed to soothe her dying moments, "Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us."

And Dr. Sherman never dreamed that that mute prayer carved in marble, was raised over the grave of his mother.

THE RESCUE.



IN the small village of Atholton, that nestled at the foot of a northern mountain, there were two men who had deserted their wives—John Ford and Newell Foster. And yet the village paper, the *Weekly Enlightener*, which paused in its glorious career of enlightening the darkness of the world to condemn, as a righteous paper should, the crime of John Ford, in fact, devoted a column and a half to a very large-worded editorial denunciation of him, said not a word about Foster.

Sympathy, without stint or measure, and a few dollars in money were given to Mrs. Ford, but not a pitying glance was bent on Mrs. Foster. And yet I think her condition incomparably the worse of the two; for when John Ford deserted his wife he took his body along, while Foster left his at home for his wife to care for, to supply its needs, to be a constant anguish to her, reminding her every moment of the bright days before he had deserted her.

Some people have a wrong impression, I think, in regard to these things. They think it is necessary for a man to run away in order to

desert his wife. I do not. Newell Foster had left his wife, just as truly as if he had betaken himself to Australia, or Ethiopia, or where not; and she was just as truly a forlorn, desolate, broken-hearted woman, as if she were outwardly, as she was in the sight of God, alone.

Mrs. Foster knew this. Ah, yes! Let her midnight tears bear witness to the truth.

John Ford and his wife had a terrible quarrel before he ran away, lawyers and a few meddlesome neighbors helping the matter along. Mr. Foster and his wife had had no quarrel. No officious friend had told Mrs. Foster that they "wouldn't stand it, so," and "to stand up for her rights," for Mrs. Foster never complained; and as for rights, I don't think Mrs. Foster thought she had any, at least she did not after she had been married a few years. In the case of Ford, a woman was connected—a woman whose mission in the world seemed to be to prove how low a soul may plunge into the depths of degradation, and how many weak souls she can carry downward with her. Newell Foster had been true to the letter of his marriage vows. Since he had stood at the altar, ten years before, with the one woman he had chosen out of the world, he had "forsaken all others," as he promised then to do.

What then had brought this state of things to pass with Mr. and Mrs. Foster? Well, I think Foster was disappointed in his wife. He thought he was marrying an heiress. Not that he married her entirely for her wealth. She had plenty of other attractions for him in those far-off days of their courtship. But Mr. Foster was a shrewd, keen, business man, who looked out for the main chance; and it was unpleasant to him, to say the least, that his respected father-in-law failed, during the first year of their marriage—failed, and hid himself from his hungry creditors in the grave, leaving his only child no heritage but a dishonored name. This was one thing. And, for another, she had borne him no children. And then she disappointed him in many ways. Her health was not good. She had been a very bright and blooming

girl when he married her; but ten years of married life, with Newell Foster for a husband, had very thoroughly weeded the roses out of her cheeks and the brightness and elasticity out of her spirits. She was now a pale, spiritless household drudge, still worshiping, unhappily, the man who had taken her from her happy girlhood home, and then deserted her. It was this love that still remained so warm and true in her heart that made the very sting of her grief. If she could have been so indignant with him that she could have resented in spirit the constant slights he put upon her, the daily humiliation of his indifference, the harsh words and looks, the hardships of labor and endurance, she could have borne it better. But she loved him, and love always makes a woman a slave—a slavery sweeter than freedom, as many a happy heart will testify, when the love is mutual, and tender, and generous. But in the case of Mrs. Foster it was a failure, so far as happiness was concerned.

Mrs. Ford's husband had left her with six little children, needy and destitute. There were plenty among those who had known her in more prosperous days to recommend the orphan asylum or the poor house. But there was one pale woman who opened her arms, longing to clasp the weakest and youngest and most helpless in them. Foster did not object when his wife proposed to adopt little Winnie Ford for their own child. Of course, his wife would take the care of it. He would have a separate room during its babyhood; he couldn't be disturbed. But the child was sweet and wonderfully bright-looking. She might grow up to be an honor to him, and he would never have any children of his own.

So little Winnie Ford Foster came to live with them, and the mother-love, that had never been satisfied, found expression. No mother could be tenderer in care and watching to her own child than was Mrs. Foster to the little one Providence had thus given to her arms. It was, perhaps, two years after this, for Winnie was a most beautiful and engaging child, just running around and beginning to say

a few words, when Mr. Foster resolved to emigrate to California. He thought he could do better there. Of course his wife made no objections to anything he proposed; if she had, it would not have changed matters at all. So, one September day they set out, poor Mrs. Ford, who was having a hard time to keep her children's bodies and souls together, dropping many tears on Winnie's little fair face.

Arrived at their destination, Mr. Foster did do well. He made more money in a year and a half than he had ever made in his life before. And, of course, he was not satisfied, and wanted to make more; so he bought a claim, hired a gang of miners, and proceeded to the distant canyon, where his claim was situated.

Mrs. Foster was beginning to like the mild climate of San Francisco. She had formed some pleasant acquaintances amongst Eastern people, who, like them had emigrated hither, and her comparative freedom from labor had given back to her a portion of her lost health. She dreaded inexpressibly the new wild home amongst the mountains, the lonely life, with only rough miners for associates, and the hard labor that must be her portion. Mr. Foster was abundantly able to hire servants to do the cooking for his men, but I don't think the idea that he could do so had ever entered his brain. He was so accustomed to the services of his legally-bound handmaiden, that, to do the man justice, I certainly do not think the thought occurred to him, that he could employ another to relieve her.

Early in May they were established in their new home, Mr. Foster's healthy, handsome countenance beaming with content, as he overlooked the labor of his men; for his venture was proving more successful than he had dared to hope for. Mrs. Foster's face looked more faded and worn than ever, for she had no gratified ambition to inspirit her. Greater wealth would not affect any favorable change in her circumstances, judging from the past. And poor, patient, weary eyes, looking into frying-pan and gridiron and sultry oven interiors, they had no time

to look away from the poverty of her surroundings indoors, to the glory of the mountains, the glory of the forests, the glory of the waters; for it was on the bank of a rushing torrent that their shanty was situated.

The rough board walls of her cabin kept the glory and the sunshine from the tired eyes, as palace walls have sometimes done when sick hearts have languished within them.

But little Winnie was happy. Her child eyes, so new to all the world, found unending delight in all the wonderful, beautiful things about her. She was the one ray of sunshine in Mrs. Foster's toilsome, loveless life. Mr. Foster was proud of his "little daughter," as he called her and thought of her. Her exceeding beauty and intelligence gratified his ambition and gave him hopes of a brilliant future for her. And, to do him justice, he was a great lover of children, and the disappointment of not having any of his own had been very hard for him to bear. They all loved her; and, in fact, it would be very difficult to help loving little Winnie Foster. Her face was sweet as an apple-blossom; just such a healthy, cheerful beauty, too; none of your delicate, wax-like, hot-house blossoming in her round, rosy little face. Her hair hung around her brow and cheeks like wavy masses of spun gold; and her eyes were like the blue gentians on the dear northern hillsides, that Mrs. Foster remembered so well.

All day long that little golden head could be seen flitting about the cabin. The miners grew to love it, hold it in a tender, sacred reverence, as they did the memories of their own little ones far away. But, above all, there was one man amongst them whose love for her knew no bounds. This was a man with wild, uncouth looks, and face nearly covered with a beard of patriarchal growth. His face was rendered more forbidding, too, by a long scar, newly healed, that cut across the forehead and one cheek.

This man, who had been hired by Mr. Foster after they had nearly reached their destination, was a stranger to all; but Mr. and Mrs. Fos-

ter were often puzzled by a curious resemblance, in the dark eyes, to some one they had once seen. He was faithful to his work and to his employer's interests; but he was not a favorite with the men. He was too reticent—surly, they called it; and as he seemed to wish to have nothing to do with them, they looked upon him with distrust and dislike.

But Winnie loved him. His rough, scarred face was beautiful to her, for it always wore a smile for her. He was never too tired to tell her the long stories she demanded of him. He gloried in the joyful ignominy of being her horse, her dog, her elephant, or whatever other animal her capricious fancy might dictate. She rode in triumphant security on his shoulder, queenly mistress of these refractory animals, her small, white hands clasped about his neck. To thus bear her up the hill to the cabin, prancing heavily if he were a horse, or with long,

unwieldy strides if he were her camel, was to Jake Wilder sufficient reward for the labors of the day.

It was one lovely morning in August that she appeared at his side, as he was rocking his rough cradle, seeking for golden reward.

"Dake, what o'o doonin'?"

He left off his work at once to tell her what he was doing—told with a kiss on the little fresh, eager face. He was glad to think of this afterward—glad to think that he stopped his work for a moment, wiped his hands on his coarse miner garb, and lifted her up in his brawny arms for one of the flying leaps through the air that she relished so well. He was obliged to go up the hill, then, to the cabin, and she at once proposed that he should go as "her el'fant." He consented, with great readiness and delight, and, placing her on his shoulder, he pranced solemnly up the hill, like a good-humored elephant bearing a fairy princess, went in his best "el'fant" tread, slower and more majestic than his gait when he was a horse.

"HER EL'FANT."

At the cabin door he set her down with another kiss; and she

looked up in his face with her trusting child eyes, and patted his rough cheeks tenderly, and said:

"I love you, Dake; you'r dood; you'r my dood old Dake."

In a few minutes she was at her mother's side.

"What o'o doonin', mamma?"

This was a great habit of the little maiden, asking every one what they were doing. Everything was so new to her; she had so many things to learn; people were doing such strange things all the time; everything was strange to her; she must be constantly asking, in order to find out things.

"What am I doing? I am working my life away. I am killing myself."

And poor, despairing, hard-worked Mrs. Foster dropped her rolling-pin in the bread-tray, and sank down in a chair.

MRS. FOSTER CAUGHT HER TO HER BREAST.

Mrs. Foster was not pale this morning. Her cheeks were flushed with a deep red hue, and her eyes shone with a strange, unnatural brilliancy. She had a terrible headache, was nervous, so she thought. All

the morning her life, so tiresome, so bare, had been confronting her. Her husband had been unusually cold and stern to her, too. Winnie looked up into her mother's despairing, passion-worked face with innocent, frightened eyes, and pretty soon her pretty lips began to quiver. Seeing this, Mrs. Foster caught her to her breast.

"Oh, my darling, if it were not for you, I would wish to die! Nobody loves me but you. Nobody would care if I did die. But you would miss me, wouldn't you, my precious?"

"Papa would cry, too," said little Winnie, with an effort at childish comfort.

"No, papa wouldn't care. Papa don't love me," cried the poor woman, bursting into tears; for she was unstrung by the near approach of the terrible sickness of which she was as yet unaware.

"Winnie loves mamma. Winnie will be dood dirl all day, two—four—nine days."

Had her scant knowledge of arithmetic enabled her promise to extend to a longer date, it would most assuredly have done so, so wrung and troubled was her childish heart at the unusual spectacle of her mother's tears.

Seeing the trouble on the baby face and the grieved quiver in the childish voice, Mrs. Foster made a great effort to calm herself. And soon the little cabin was as quiet, to outward appearance, as if no gust of stormy passion had so lately swept through it.

Mrs. Foster braced her fainting form to go on with her preparation for dinner; and Winnie, soon as light-hearted as before, flitted about as usual.

Mr. Foster was sitting on a bench, at some distance from the cabin, looking at some new specimens of ore one of his men had recently discovered. It was richer than had ever been taken before from his mines; and he was sitting, lost in golden visions, with his *sombrero* drawn down over his handsome blonde face.

"What o'o doonin', papa?"

So absorbed was Mr. Foster in his golden dreamings, that, as he was sorry to remember afterward, he did not respond to her childish question till after it was three or four times repeated, and then he bade her "run away, he was busy." But little Winnie had something upon her mind, and was not to be put away.

"Papa, mamma is killing herself!"

"What is it?" This drew his attention very thoroughly. "What is it you say, child?"

"Mamma is killing herself, and she said you wouldn't care! She said you didn't love her; and then mamma cried, she did. Don't you love her, papa? She's a dood mamma, I fink."

"What do you mean by her killing herself?"

And then Winnie went on, with great minuteness, to explain the rise and progress of the conversation.

"I said, 'Mamma, what o'o doonin'?' Mamma said, 'I killing myself, working.'"

"Oh," cried Mr. Foster, with a relieved look. It was only a womanish, nervous complaining, that was all. But little Winnie went on:

"That wasn't when she cried—when she said she killing herself. She said you wouldn't care she dead. Then she cried, she did, awful hard, she cried. She said you didn't love her. Don't you love her, papa?"

And little Winnie, who was constantly asking questions of everybody, and would, if possible, never give up her pursuit of knowledge upon any subject, in her eagerness to discover the truth of this most singular assertion of her mother, repeated the question, looking up into his face with innocent, wondering eyes.

"Don't you love her, papa, my dood mamma?"

"Love her? Of course. What a question! Run away, now; I am busy."

And he turned away once more to examine his golden treasure, and delight in it. But, somehow, after the little form had flitted away, as he had bidden it, he couldn't help letting his mind wander from the golden treasure in his hands to the words of the golden-haired little preacher, who had so lately spoken to him. "Love his wife!" The words had come glibly enough to his lips when he was speaking to little Winnie. Of course he loved her! What a question! Wasn't she his wife—his lawful wife? The idea of his love for her being called in question! He, a church-member—he who read the Bible every Sabbath, and who had always kept his heart from wandering after strange idols. Love his wife! What an idea! But he couldn't quiet his conscience, his remorseful emotions, by thus braving it out. His conscience, that had been his servant, a careless servant, too, sleeping at its post, woke up now, and was his master—a more relentless and inexorable master because it had so long slumbered, and was now arisen, a king indeed.

In what way had he shown his love for her for years past? Were frowns, and indifference, and cold, harsh words the language of love? Was it in that way he had won her from all other suitors, in the long-forgotten spring-time of their lives? That sweet girl-wife, so fair, so dear, so blooming. "Her good mamma." Yes, she had been a good mother to the child, a good wife to him. Memories of her unselfish, patient devotion, her life given for him, rushed upon him like a wave—a wave that, long held back by icy barriers, rushes on more overwhelmingly, relentlessly. There could not be a more complete abnegation of self than had been hers all through their married life. Her life had been given for his as truly as if she had laid it down for his sake on some battle-field. It was not an easy thing for him to stand thus, face to face, with conscience, with these remorseful memories, these new anguished thoughts of the patient love he had so long slighted. But he had make a home for her, so he said to himself; he had supported her,

fed and clothed her. But this relentless conscience said to him, that he would have done all that for a servant, and never would have dared to treat a servant as he had her, knowing the servant would leave him if he did. This legally-bound, patient thrall he knew could never leave him, bound as she had been by her pride, her love for him.

But he had worked hard himself for their united interests, had been successful; and was it not for her as much as himself? Was it? His conscience asked him now. Was it to gratify his ambitious desire to be a rich man, or was it to make his wife's life easier, happier, more perfect and complete that he had striven? Many, many questions did his conscience put to him, questions which he tried to evade, but could not. But, above all, did his heart ache with the thought of the patient love, toiling, year after year, for his comfort, yielding to his most unreasonable wishes, patient with his upbraidings, his coldness, his cruel words, and loving him—loving him through all.

The sun stole upward and stood over his head, and slowly, silently the shadow of the pine tree crept toward the east. He did not notice that the dinner-horn, which always sounded punctually at noon, had not been heard, did not notice how far the shadow of the pine tree over his head was reaching eastward. He sat there, with his face in his hands, and his golden ore falling unnoticed in a glittering mass at his feet, till the loud sound of excited voices reached his ears, coming from the cabin. He rose and followed the voices. The rough miners made way for him to enter his own door. And there, by the half-prepared dinner-table, fallen like a good soldier at her post, lay Mrs. Foster—an honorable soldier, worthy of a commander's stars and straps, in that wide band of household martyrs who fall unknelled and undecorated by admiring nations, but who surely will not be forgotten by the great Chief Captain of the world when He makes out His true roll of honor.

Dead! So they all called her. Dead! So the sorrow-stricken, conscience-smitten man, white to his lips, said as he bent over her, call-

ing her by the old, loving names, that surely, if her spirit were still outside the heavenly gate, would waken her to blissful consciousness. Dead! And he could never tell her his remorse, never, never beg upon his knees for her forgiveness.

But Mrs. Foster was not dead. Slowly did she come back out of the terrible fainting fit, that was like the twin-sister of death—came back out of the shadow of the Valley—awoke to a stupor and delirium

MRS. FOSTER WAS NOT DEAD.

that left her mercifully unconscious of another grief that fell upon the sorely-tried heart of her husband.

Winnie was gone!

It was sometime before they thought of the child, so engrossed were they with the apparently dead woman. It was Jake Wilder who thought of her first. He was the first man to go, although they rushed out at once to search for her. Mr. Foster, although torn with anxiety about the child he loved so well, still stayed with his wife, of course.

At nightfall they came in despairing, went out again in the solemn darkness, their lanterns gleaming, like falling stars, through the forest-paths and up the woody side of the canyon. But it was near midnight

THE SEARCH.

when they came upon the first trace of her, a scrap of her white dress torn off by a thorny bush. It was on the direct path that led to a precipitous bluff, hundreds of feet high, beneath which deep, muddy waters whirled and eddied. Arrived here, one man, held by another strong hand, peered over the dizzy verge. It was no use, the man said, drawing back. No human power could reach her if she had fallen down there. Even as the man said this, a child's cry was borne faintly upward from

the depths below. They were brave men, bred to danger, and they would undoubtedly have faced death with coolness and bravery, but they trembled and turned pale before that faint child-cry. Again, the man who had looked first, held by the same strong hand, peered downward over the straight, rocky wall, and there he could just discover, far, far down, amidst a cluster of bushes and stunted trees that grew out of a cleft in the steep wall, a faint glimmer of white. In falling over the cliff, midway to death, these bushes had caught the child, and had saved her. "No, no human power could save her." So the man said, shuddering as he looked downward. They only detained her for a moment at death's door.

At this moment Jake Wilder came up from his search in another direction. "I will save her," he said, "or die with her." Life, to tell the truth, was not over sweet to Jake Wilder. A hundred times during the past year had despair urged him to end it, throw it down as a miserable failure. Now he would give it, give it for the sweet little Northern Blossom, the one being in the world whose innocent little heart loved him, trusted him. In vain his rough mates endeavored to dissuade him from his suicidal purposes, his vain attempt, for no one could save the child—no one, they declared. It was only throwing his life away, too.

He knew it would be impossible to reach the child by going downward—down that straight, steep, slippery wall. His only hope lay in reaching her from beneath, working his way out over the whirling, mad waters, and then toiling up the steep precipice, a little less steep here; upward, toiling upward, with that little white form for an inspiration. We read of men whose conversion to good is the work of many years, toiling in their upward path toward good, helped by the inspiration of a purer soul, who leads them gently upward by her nobler example, learning, by the love and patience of a human soul, above them, yet still beating for them, something of the Divine Love and patience that

shines downward upon the weakest, lowliest toiler, who looks upward through these earthly mists, seeking the heavenly light.

And we read also of those whose soul's change is the work of a moment, wrought in some crisis, some great temptation resisted, some wonderful preservation, some despairing prayer, that God has answered in the midst of deadly peril. Who shall say that this rough miner's cry was not heard in Heaven—his frenzied appeal, that perhaps he did not call a prayer—the wild cry for Divine help, when his human strength was failing him—the wild promise, that, if God would permit him to save the child, he would be a different man, a better man? And so, in the night and the darkness, he worked on, struggling upward, despairing, but fainting not, for love of the little fair soul above him, toiling slowly upward, through the solemn shadows, near to the more solemn mystery of death, upheld by the Divine inspiration of love.

It was a miracle! That was what his wondering companions called it, as he sat at the foot of the precipice, with Winnie's little form pressed to his heart, and the morning light faintly dawning in the east, the fresh, pure light of another morning shining upon his uncovered brow, and his earnest eyes that were filled with a new purpose. They called it a miracle, and talked loudly about it. He said little. I have noticed that heroes are rarely garrulous concerning their heroic deeds. As soon as he could walk, he bore Winnie back to the camp, disdaining any help in carrying her. He said little, but his rough cheek, wet with tears, lay upon Winnie's little, fair face, the face of the child who loved him, trusted him; and, as he bore her onward, he murmured often in her ear, "My child, my own child, my little Northern Blossom."

Did the love and trust that he read in the pure little face, looking up into his so confidingly, encourage him, reminding him of the greater love, the greater trust, that never tires, never wearies, that yearns over the weakest and lowliest wanderer, longing to give him Divine welcome home?

Mrs. Foster lay for many weeks with death upon one side of her, and her husband's devoted, untiring love and care upon the other, uncertain to whom would be given the victory. And, in those long, long hours of watching and waiting, he learned more of the heart history of the patient, reticent woman than he had ever known — learned through the wild delirium of the aching heart, that had carried its burden so silently and patiently — learned of the passionate love, that, like an eastern idolater, she had lavished upon her stone idol. It was not a stone idol now. No. His heart was very human in its aching, its despair, its longing that she might live, so that he could redeem the past, could teach her what love was, what it was to be guarded and shielded by loving care, could teach her what it was to be treasured, beloved, precious to the heart that had so long slighted her goodness, her long-suffering.

When the delirium of the fever left her, a pale shadow hovering upon the mysterious intermediate realm between life and death, I think it was her husband's kisses upon her face, his loving words lavished so freely, that wrought the real miracle of restoration. Dr. Quackenbos thought it was his pills.

As for the man they called Jake Wilder, the change wrought in him in that hour of peril and agony was not evanescent. He said little, but his life spoke. A weary woman in Atholton read of that change, in burdens lifted from her by a stronger hand, in letters doing her a tardy justice, in repentance, in promises of future well-doing. And so John Ford returned to his wife.

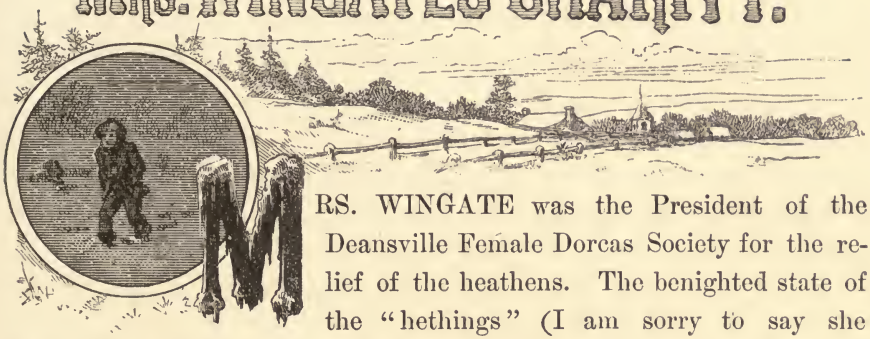
Newell Foster sold his claim with large profits, and built a splendid mansion in his native village of Atholton, in which his wife and beautiful daughter dwelt like princesses. It was an elegant place, furnished as was no other house in the place. Well-trained servants relieved Mrs. Foster of all the drudgery of domestic toil. And people thought, as they looked in Mrs. Foster's happy, rosy face, that the content and hap-

piness that was to be so plainly read there were caused by the beauty of her surroundings and the ease of her life. But she knew, in her heart, that the secret of her joy was not in these, although they were very pleasant, but in this, that her husband, who had deserted her, had returned to her.

In an humbler home, John Ford and his wife were practicing the old lesson they had scorned to learn once, to bear and forbear. Mr. Foster helped John Ford to a business that enabled him to support his family in comfort. And so John Ford returned to his wife, and was forgiven. And the *Weekly Enlightener* made a good thing out of it, in the way of an editorial, warmly commending the repentance and the forgiveness, in words nearly all of which were from three to four syllables in length. And Newell Foster returned to his wife also; and since God and his angels made note of it, I think it is of comparatively little moment that the editor of the *Weekly Enlightener* did not record the fact in its columns.

MABEL WINGATE.

MRS. WINGATES CHARITY.



MRS. WINGATE was the President of the Deansville Female Dorcas Society for the relief of the heathens. The benighted state of the "hethings" (I am sorry to say she pronounced it thus,) was a constant source of uneasiness to the portly relict of Elnathan Wingate.

Her eyes had always been noted for their far-reaching views, gifted like Mrs. Jelloby's with the faculty of looking calmly over household wants and native sufferers into foreign jungles and cactus thickets, seeking after prowling heathens upon whom to bestow her charities. But I think for the past year she had been more solicitous than ever for their welfare, since the wife of young Dr. Dean had died, leaving the vacancy in the above society which Mrs. Wingate now so ably filled. We say young Dr. Dean, but he was not so very young; he was past forty, to be exact. But he was always called the young doctor to distinguish him from his father, who had been the village doctor before him, and who still dwelt in the village with his good wife.

John Dean the father, and Ellis Dean the son, (he was an only child,) were very popular in the village; in fact, the village took its name from the elder gentleman, he having owned the most of the

land upon which the village was founded, some fifty years before. The village had grown rapidly, and of a consequence, their wealth had increased; they were the richest men in the place, and, what is not always the case, they were the most respected and beloved.

Mrs. Ellis Dean had been a childless woman, whose great heart ached over all suffering, and who had abundant means and leisure to bestow upon private and public charities. She attended well to the wants of her household; her servants found in her a most indulgent and generous mistress. The poor and needy about her received her attention and bounty first, and then as she had still abundant means and time left, she next extended her care to more remote sufferers.

Her husband was the most warm-hearted and charitable of men. This gentle woman having left him, he now dwelt alone with only servants for companions in his great house overlooking the village. And rumor said he had been heard to observe to his close friend, the village clergyman, "that it was not good for man to live alone." It was a Sabbath noon that he was reported to have said this, the very Sabbath that Mabel Wingate came to church the first time, on her return from the boarding-school where she had been for the past five years.

She had not been a pupil for the last three years. Rumor said she preferred the life of a teacher to that of being a dependent upon the bounty of a step-mother — her father, who was rather a meek and easily influenced old gentleman, having made a very singular will, giving his wife the control of it all during her life.

It made a great excitement in Deansville at the time, people very justly believing that it was a triumph of Mrs. Wingate's rather plotting turn of mind. But that had taken place three years before, and newer excitements had driven it out of the minds of the people. But now Mabel had come home. Her step-mother had had a severe though short fit of sickness, and thinking she was about to die, had sent for

Mabel. Perhaps her conscience was aroused, but by the time Mabel reached her, her fever had abated, her conscience twinges also. But a new teacher was engaged for the term to fill Mabel's place, so she was forced to remain until she could get a new situation. The first Sabbath Mabel went to church, Dr. Dean thought he had never seen a lovelier face than hers. His pew was directly back of Mrs. Wingate's. (It is said that Mrs. Wingate paid ten dollars extra to obtain that seat, it having been warmly sought for by the widow Kelley, and partly promised to three maiden sisters, the Misses Dagget.) Dr. Dean thought he had never seen a sweeter sight than that gently drooping head bending devoutly over her prayer book, the pearly neck sometimes gleaming through the long brown curls, the tender sensitive mouth, the large, soft, wistful brown eyes, that seemed pleading for love and sympathy. She kept these wonderful eyes bent very earnestly either upon her book or the minister's face, but once they lifted to his face as she left her seat. It was almost directly after this that he made to the clergyman this remark we have just quoted. Not a singular remark at all. Many bereaved ones have experienced the same sentiments. Many men surrounded by female relatives have experienced an overwhelming source of lonesomeness, and need of female society. Bereaved women, too, have experienced their firm conviction that it is not good to dwell alone. Mrs. Wingate had said the same to him, when, soon after his wife's death, she sent for him to extract a tooth (nearly sound). She said to him with much feeling: — "That it was awful lonesome 'livin'' alone, when anybody had lost a dear companion." But she added immediately, for she thought of the doctor's reputation for charity, "that she felt ashamed to complain of lonesomeness when she thought of the hethings; what was her lonesomeness compared with the hethings' lonesomeness."

Dr. Dean did not give his opinion concerning the heathen's social state, and she continued with a warm gush of sentiment to ask his

advice, whether red mittens, or striped blue and white ones would be the most acceptable to the young heathens. It was while she was asking him this question that Tom, "the boy she took" from the poor-house, came into the room with a load of wood. It was a very cold day, and the boy ventured, after he had laid the wood down, to spread his long thin hands before the cheerful blaze. Mrs. Wingate only looked at him, but the boy obeyed the look as he would a musket. He left the room instantly, and the doctor going out directly afterwards, found him shivering on the door-step, and wiping his eyes.

"What is the matter?" said the doctor, with his great, cheerful voice.

"I wish I was a hething; I would give a cent if I was one this minit."

"Why do you wish that?" said the doctor.

"Because I am so cold, and haint nothin' to wear, and don't have no mittens, and if I was a hething, I should be tended to, and I am most froze this very minute; I know I be."

"Why don't you go in and warm you?"

"She wont lem'me stay in a minute, Miss Wingit wont; says I must work, says I don't earn my salt, and I don't eat much salt any way, I know I don't, and I am at it from mornin' till night, diggin' away at sunthin' or other. I wish to gracious Peter, I was a hething, I know I do."

"Well, I guess you do have to work pretty hard now. But it is a long lane that never turns. There will be brighter days for you, sometime; you will see there will, Tom. Now you run in and warm your fingers. Don't be afraid, she will let you stay." And opening the door, the doctor put his head in and called Mrs. Wingate, who came bustling to the door, with the sweetest of smiles.

"Here is a little native object that you can spend some of the benevolence of your warm heart upon; he says he is cold, and wants to go to the fire."

"Bless the dear child! why didn't he come right in?"

Tom knew, but he also knew it wouldn't do to tell his thoughts. So he slipped silently by and luxuriated in the warmth of the genial blaze while he could. He was not permitted to remain there long. But all the day while he toiled out in the cold, the words of the doctor cheered his lonely heart. "It is a long lane that never turns."

This occurred about a year before Mrs. Wingate's sickness, when Mabel came home, and the doctor made the memorable speech to which we have referred, "That it was not good for man to live alone." Mrs. Wingate's convalescence was slow; after a few weeks she seemed to all appearance well; but every heart knoweth its own bitterness, and who may question the President of the Dorcas Society, as to the need of a physician. With great earnestness she continually affirmed "that she felt awful run down, and she must have the doctor every day or two."

And she further remarked to her bosom friend, the grocer's wife, and the Vice-President of the Dorcas, "That Dr. Dean hadn't never been so punctual a comin', and never had n't stayed so long before as he did now; he was dretful inspirin' in his conversation, made her think dretfully of her deceased companion."

But the strongest sunshine casts the darkest shadow, and Mrs. Wingate informed the doctor one day "that after he went away, every time, she had to cry, because it brung up her loneliness more'n more; made her think so much of her deceased companion, that she couldn't keep from cryin', though she knew it was wrong, knowin' her state was so much more comfortable than the hethings. But still no tongue could tell how much he reminded her of her deceased companion, and nobody could tell her lonesomeness only them who had gone through the same affectin' circumstances, and was in the same lonesome state."

The doctor did not call the next day, nor all that week. But the next Sabbath, the wistful brown eyes so touched his heart with their tender sunshine, that Monday afternoon he called.

Mrs. Wingate had left home that day for the first time. The Dorcas met that day at the Vice-President's, and the bosom friend could not be denied the privilege of her advice and company.

As a truthful historian, I must conceal nothing, and regretting warmly as I do, that I cannot make my hero that faultless being that usually roams over the pages of magazines and periodicals — still at the risk of ruining him forever in the estimation of right-minded people, I must say that when he went to call on his patient that day, he knew she was not at home. He saw her portly back in the window of the Vice-President's mansion as he passed a mile back. How then shall I apologize for his look of mild astonishment to find her absent, and no one but Mabel at home? I shall not attempt to palliate his guilt, and by so doing make myself almost equally guilty.

Mabel blushed when she looked up and saw the doctor, and who can wonder, for she was engaged in business, such as no heroine was ever engaged in before, I am confident. What was it? I will tell you. When Mrs. W. left home that day, she did as she always did, left Tom employment enough to keep him from the evil effects of idleness. But upon this occasion, she went beyond even herself, and left him more work, (it was picking over beans,) than any pair of hands, however nimble, could possibly do. But he must finish it before her return or go to bed supperless, and be whipped into the bargain. And Tom knew by almost daily experience that Mrs. Wingate's whippings were not easy to endure. There were two bushels of the beans, and as poor Tom looked at the formidable pile of snowy kernels mingled liberally with stones and sticks which he was to separate like sheep from goats, the magnitude of the undertaking, and his

inability to accomplish it in time, and the dreadful consequences of his failure, all rushed over him like a wave, and he lifted up his voice and wept.

Mabel was in the parlor making a shirt for him out of her own half-worn garments. She thought as she looked at Tom's bare arms swinging half out of his ragged sleeves, that this was her duty rather than attend the Dorcas Society that day. And to tell the truth, Mrs. Wingate did not ask her to go — possibly she wanted to discuss Mabel's shortcomings with her bosom friend.

When Mabel heard Tom's voice rising in its dire grief, her soft little heart, which could never endure the sight of any human misery, was touched at once, and she dropped her sewing and went to his assistance. She had been there perhaps an hour, and between them the pile was rapidly lessening, and further to the delight of Tom's soul, she was telling him a wonderful story, one of Hans Christian Andersen's. Tom's hands were busy, but he was not there in that dingy kitchen; borne by the sweet voice, upward, outward, he had entered a fiery palace — he had found the enchanted lamp — he was the custodian of royal treasures. It was just at this moment, as Tom's eyes large and sparkly were raised to Mabel's face — she, with her light muslin sleeves thrown back from her white dimpled arm, busy at her work — smiling the rosiest of smiles upon poor Tom, entrancing him with her romancing. Just at this moment the doctor entered, and Mabel blushed as we said. And it seemed that her very coloring was infectious, for as our handsome doctor looked full into her gleaming face, a warm coloring swept up into his own. For a moment they looked in spite of their good standing in community and their unblemished reputation, like two guilty criminals, and to tell the truth, I am afraid they were guilty of theft. I am afraid they had stolen each other's hearts. As we have said, Tom and our good doctor were sworn friends, and a few words from Tom's grateful heart told

the story. And then nothing to do, but the doctor must sit down by the table and help. Oh! blissful kitchen walls! Oh! rapturous employment! The swiftly decreasing pile might have been diamonds and pearls for all the doctor and Mabel knew. Unhappy Mrs. Wingate! tell short stories at the Dorcas Society, cut short your revelations to your bosom friend about Dr. Dean's intentions, and your fast vanishing lonesomeness. A weaker hand than yours has taken him captive, and is leading him.

Mabel and the doctor stood by Tom faithfully till they left him with a task easy to accomplish. And then they went into the sunny parlor flooded with the western sunshine, and the rarer glow of heart light. And Mabel at the doctor's request opened the old piano that had been her mother's, and sung for him sweet English ballads, and quaint German songs, and the golden sun moved on too rapidly, as they talked of books, authors, and what not, and his eyes told that wonderful story, old, yet forever new, and Mabel's beating heart translated it.

This happy, happy call of the doctor's at Mrs. Wingate's was not the last, we can assure you, and Mrs. Wingate told her bosom friend at the next meeting of the Dorcas Society, "that nobody could tell only them that was in an afflicted state, how comforting it was to have Dr. Dean so neighborly; three times that week he had been there, and each time reminded her more and more of her deceased companion."

Then the Vice-President joked her openly, and said "she guessed somebody wouldn't remain a relict long." And Mrs. Wingate smiled a very conscious smile, and said "she felt different from what she used to about folks'es marryin' the second time, and she thought Dr. Dean had mourned in a lonesome state long enough."

"Just so," said the Vice-President, "his wife couldn't be any deader twenty years from now than she is now." As was only proper for such near friends, they interchanged a good many such thoughts,

and then the subject drifted round to the one that most deeply interested them at that time: the fast approaching fair. The next meeting of the Society, and the last one before the fair, was to be held at Mrs. Wingate's. All the articles must be completed, for, as Mrs. Wingate well remarked, "the money ought to be sent on before winter sets in, so the hethings could purchase their winter clothing."

The ladies of the society worked hard and exclusively at their employment. Cold weather came on suddenly, and severely. And the father of the Vice-President, an old gentleman given to asthma, took to his bed through exposure to the cold. He had purchased woolen cloth for shirts, but his daughter had no time to make them, her energies being so intent in obtaining winter clothing for the Ethiopians. The Secretary's two little boys went round with bare hands and summer pantaloons, that showed their cold red knees. They had bad colds, but their father at night gave them Hive's Syrup, and cheered them with hoarhound candy; but with all his care, the children suffered much.

The Treasurer's bed-ridden mother had a dangerous relapse, her daughter having forgotten her for nearly a whole day. On the afternoon, suddenly remembering her, she, conscience stricken, deluged her with water gruel and cream toast. But the old lady being regular in her habits, and weak, the forced abstinence told on her. But poor little Tom suffered most of all. As we said, the next meeting was to be held at Mrs. Wingate's, and it was a busy time there. For, as Mrs. Wingate told her bosom friend, "she was determined to have the best supper that had been given by any of the Society." This was not done to astonish the Society, merely, but being President, and therefore supposed to be answerable to no laws, and being abetted by the Vice-President, told her under a gentle vein of obscurity, "that when a certain man was paying attentions to a certain woman, it was only that woman's duty to invite that certain man when there was

going to be doings there." Mrs. Wingate was going to invite Dr. Dean to be present at the supper, if no longer.

It was the twentieth day of October, about a week before the society was to meet at Mrs. Wingate's, and the very day before the sudden change in the weather, from warm to severe cold, that Mabel was taken sick with diphtheria, so she could not assist Mrs. Wingate in her preparations, nor befriend poor Tom who went shivering around in his insufficient garments, working from morn till night, eating his scanty cold meals when he could — sometimes when the fever of preparation ran too high, going without them — driven round by his mistress as she would not drive a horse, for she was too careful of her property to risk the well-being of a horse with incessant labor, without rest, sufficient food, and warmth.

Mrs. Wingate sent for Dr. Dean a day or two after Mabel was taken sick. The doctor ran his best horse as it had never been driven, for he was usually merciful to man and beast. But to his delight he found there had been no need for such hot haste. She was not so sick after all. It would probably confine her to her room several days; but there was nothing alarming about it. Shall we say that Dr. Dean lavished his finest skill in the treatment of his beautiful patient? No, we will not say so, for it is a rule with us not to make needless remarks. Shall we say that the tenderness and sympathy Mabel saw in her doctor's kind eyes was better than his medicine? No, we will not use vain words like the heathen.

It was during Dr. Dean's first visit that Mrs. Wingate, in her evident admiration for him, said:—

"As I was a telling you, doctor, I want you to do everything you can for her; come every day if it is necessary — or twice a day. I shan't begrudge the money. Her poor deceased father left the whole of his property to me, during my life, as is well known, for it made lots of talk at the time, as you well remember. Lots of folks being

mean enough to say that I coaxed him up and took the advantage of him, to get him to will it to me. But there haint a word of truth in it as can be proved, for he was alone in the room with the lawyer when he made his will; how could I take the advantage of him, and coax him up when I wasn't there? But as I was a saying, for all he left all of his property to me, one farm jining

GIVING HIM POINTS.

your place, as you know, your paster being on one side of the fence, and mine on the other, and as I was sayin' to the Vice-President the other day, says I, Harriet, if that fence was only throwed down, there wouldn't be a paster equal to it in the country. But as I was a sayin' to you, for all Mabel is dependent on me for everything as long as I live, I want you to do well by her, and I am willin', and more than willin' that you should

come every day; mebbe you wont have a chance to see me always."

Here a look of warm relief came into the doctor's handsome face. But Mrs. Wingate did not observe it, and went on: —

"I am so took up a working for the good of the hethings. The next meeting is to be held here, and I want you to come, so I said to my friend, the Vice-President, says I, Harriet, if I am turned out of the Society the next minute, I am going to invite Dr. Dean. Says I, Harriet, what first drawed me towards that man, a religious drawin' of course, was when I heard folks a telling what a hand he was to do good to his fellow creatures. I felt that here was a congenial soul that would sympathize with me in my yearning of spirit over the hething. Says I, Harriet, it makes me love the hethings better to think he loves 'em so well. And oh! my dear doctor, what a blessed work that is. Nobody knows how I feel for them benighted souls that know not the language of prayer, and know not what good clothing is. Nobody knows the tears I shed for 'em when every body thinks I am asleep. Seven bed-quilts have we pieced up this summer for them, besides another cut out, and my table at the fair will be perfectly loaded with things I have made myself. Of course you will be to the fair, and you must be sure to come to the next society meeting."

Here, through the inexorable necessity for breath to carry on the breathing apparatus, Mrs. Wingate was obliged to stop for a moment, and the doctor, seizing the opportunity, succeeded in taking his immediate departure.

As he passed out into the highway, and was unfastening his horse that was rather restless in the keen frosty air, little Tom passed him. His thin, pale face, blue with cold, looked pinched and worn, and oh! so very cold. His clothing was far better for July than November, and his boots which had formerly been the property of Mr. Wingate, were still not large enough to conceal his suffering stocking-

less feet. He had a large load of rough scraggly wood in his arms, apple boughs and limbs cut with much labor into the requisite length, his long, bony, bare wrists showing to forlorn advantage, clasping his rugged burden. The doctor spoke cheerily to the little man, it was a way of his, and poor cold little Tom almost thought the air grew warmer beneath the kindly light of the gray eyes.

"You are at work busy as ever this cold day, I see, Tom."

"Yes, sir; Mrs. Wingit wanted it brung in, and I'm a bringin' on it."

"Haven't you plenty of wood in the wood-house?"

"Yes, sir; but she wanted it chopped up out of the way, and I'm a choppin' of it. Tougher'n fury to cut, but I'd rather cut it than bring it in, I know I had. It is a long ways to bring it — hands get cold, and it makes my back ache."

"There will be brighter days for you Tom."

TOM.

How to bring these "brighter days," the good doctor did not

know, for Tom was legally bound to Mrs. Wingate, and as for complaining of inhumanity in the President of the Dorcas Society for the relief of the heathens — perish the irreverent thought. But still the doctor repeated the words that might give some comfort to the heart that so sorely needed comfort, adding: —

"Don't you know I have always told you so; your turn will come some day; it is a long lane that never turns; don't you know I have always told you so, Tom?"

"Yes'ir."

"But at the present time, your hands ache, don't they?"

"Yes'ir."

Tom had rested his hands up against the fence while he was talking with the doctor, and he looked down now with a sort of pitying expression upon the little bare red extremities.

"Miss Mabel said she'd make me some mittens out of broadcloth, she's got a piece. She'll make 'em I guess when she gets well enough. She's goin' to get well, ain't she?" And Tom looked wishfully up into the doctor's face.

"Yes, she will get well, I think. So she is going to make you a pair of mittens?"

"Yes, sir; she said she'd gimme some. Awfully hope she'll get well; it's lonesomer'n fury without her. She's gooder'n anything you ever see; stands jawin' first rate. Mrs. Wingit jaws her awfully sometimes — helps me lots. Mends up my clothes some when she is well. They are tored out agin now." And Tom looked down ruefully upon his bare knees.

"Well, as she isn't well enough to make your mittens, and it is so cold, suppose you take these."

And Dr. Dean pulled off his warm fur-lined gloves, and laid them on Tom's hands; and before grateful Tom could scarcely say a word of thanks he sprang into his buggy and drove off.

Tom put on the warm gloves, wondering at their warmth, their softness, and went toward the house with a lighter step. Not so very light, however, for of late Tom had found it hard work to drag about; he seemed to have but little strength. Mrs. Wingate called it laziness.

The meeting at Mrs. Wingate's was pronounced a success. Her supper far surpassed anything that had been known in the annals of the Dorcas. But when did the blossom of perfect happiness ever spring from earthly soil? In Mrs. Wingate's heart an arrow rankled. Dr. Dean could not attend; business unfortunately demanded his attendance elsewhere. So he had told Mrs. Wingate the morning of the party, when he left after a long call upon Mabel.

"It was aggravating." So the President told the Vice-President in confidence, on a lounge behind her bedroom door. "Harriet, it is aggravating. And there I sent Tom to the village after dark in the snow and rain for some vanilla for the ice cream, having happened to hear the doctor say he preferred it to any other seasoning. Tom made a great fuss about going — said he was sick; but I wouldn't hear a word to it. I wont countenance complaining. I thought my soul that he never would come back. Of course he went afoot. I wouldn't take a horse out in the storm; and he just moped along like a snail. It provoked me so that I put him to bed without his supper."

"Good enough for him," said the Vice-President. "But where is he? I haven't seen him to-day."

"No, he has laid round all day. I haven't got enough out of him to-day to pay for his salt. But he has got to stir his stumps now, for some woolen yarn has got to be had to finish the mittens, and some pink calico to finish the bed-quilt; and Tom has got to go, or I'll tell him the reason why."

He pleaded hard against going to the village; but Mrs. Wingate was inexorable. The fair was to be the next week. No time could be

"So out in the cold went Tom."

wasted, for the good of the heathen was at stake. So out into the cold went little Tom, and dragged his heavy limbs that weary two miles. The chilly wind tore at his ragged clothing as if it had a special spite against him, and was determined to undress him entirely. The snow fell upon his cold, thin face, and found no warmth there to melt it, and every icy blast pierced his chest like a knife, for Tom had taken a very bad cold, settling upon his lungs. Having delivered the calico and woolen yarn into the hands of Mrs. Wingate, he fell, rather than sat, into a chair by the kitchen stove, and finally crept up the attic stairs, and cowered down under his scanty bed clothing.

Happily, Tom's yarn and cloth came just in time to prevent a half-hour's cessation of labor for the heathen. Then fingers flew. Let the naked Ethiopians rejoice. What though he be wretched now, lying upon his bed of palm leaves, and pulling tropic flowers with bare hands? Rejoice, unhappy brothers; for

warm hearts are beating for you, bedquilts are being pieced for you, woolen mittens are being knitted by tender, womanly fingers. Their fingers flew and their tongues. Many pitying words and desires were bestowed upon the foreign sufferers. But, alas, for the little native heathen, lying uncared for and alone, fighting for every breath he drew, "naked, athirst, and faint," in the cold attic-room above them!

Congestion Dr. Dean would have called it if he had seen Tom. But he did not see him, for when he was there in the morning to visit Mabel, the boy was cowering upon his bare bed in the attic, too glad of the rest to care much if the snow was sifting down through the broken windows, and making quite a pile at the bed head.

The night of the fair was a beautiful, cold, star-lit evening. Mrs. Wingate went to the hall where it was to be held early in the morning, and left it not until nearly midnight—or, that is, she left it for a few moments only. Towards sunset she went home with the Vice-President, who lived near, long enough to array herself in a gorgeous dress of orange and green plaid silk, which she had purchased with a view to the overthrow of Dr. Dean. She had, with a further design to ruin his peace of mind, purchased a head-dress so radiant with different colors and beauty, that she was confident it must needs bring him to her feet. In fact, all the long summer and autumn, Mrs. Wingate had looked forward to the scene where she was to triumph over all the single females of Deansville, and carry off its greatest prize in the matrimonial market. We all must needs have some locality in which to rear our castles, and Mrs. Wingate had erected the airy structure of her hopes in the lighted and brilliant interior of Jefferson Hall. She thought when he saw her stand so glorious in apparel, so elevated in rank above the adjoining women, surrounded by such evidences of her liberality and philanthropy, he must, if his heart were not stone, yield to their combined fascinations.

But, although she hurried the Vice-President as she was parting her

back hair and looping up her overskirt, yearning to be behind her table in full glory when he arrived, and though she walked back so fast that she was nearly breathless, and the Vice-President panted for breath, being troubled with asthma, Dr. Dean was not there. One—two—three—four hours passed, the fair was ended, and Dr. Dean had not been there at all. Alas! for the western castle, it is in ruins.

But where was Dr. Dean, he who had never been known to absent himself from any charitable institution or meeting whatever? We will tell you.

Mabel, although a great deal better—almost well, in fact—did not attend the fair. For the past two days, ever since she had left her room, she had given all her time and strength to poor little Tom, and the day of the fair he was much worse. But he was very patient. All his life he had had his real needs too much neglected to be fanciful and hard to suit. Everything that Mabel did for him was just right. The food she prepared for him "was good, he knew it was," although he could not eat it. But he tried to. He would lift his little weak hands for anything she brought him, and smile his thanks with such a patient gratitude that Mabel's heart was quite wrung to behold it.

She would bring him some dainty prepared by herself, and say:

"This is good, Tom; don't you believe it is?"

"Yes, mam."

"Will you try to eat a little of it?"

"Yes, mam."

"Can't you eat one bit of it?"

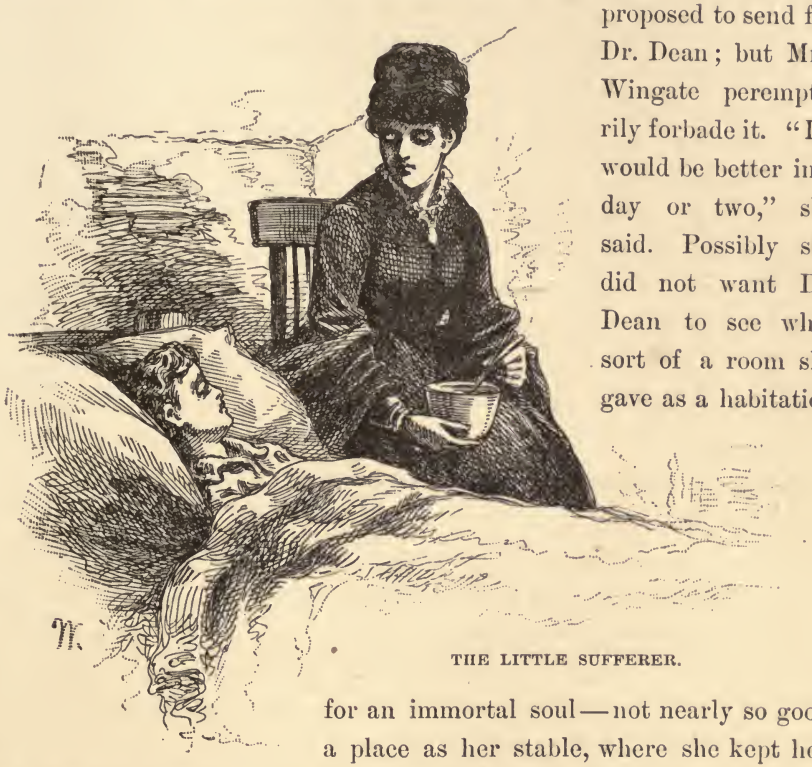
"No, mam."

"Can't you think of anything you would like?"

"No, mam."

Not once did this answer change, till the pitifulness of it and the pathos of the little worn face and his quiet patience seemed so pitiful to witness, that Mabel would have been almost glad had he shown a touch

of petulance and impatience. But he never did, and he grew worse constantly. The morning of the fair he was so much worse that Mabel proposed to send for Dr. Dean; but Mrs. Wingate peremptorily forbade it. "He would be better in a day or two," she said. Possibly she did not want Dr. Dean to see what sort of a room she gave as a habitation



THE LITTLE SUFFERER.

for an immortal soul — not nearly so good a place as her stable, where she kept her sleek carriage horses. And all that day Mabel watched by him, with a thick shawl around her, and going down often to warm herself by the fire. She had brought pillows and bed-quilts from her own room, and made him as comfortable as he could be made there. But poor Tom grew delirious as his afternoon fever burned up more fiercely than ever. He babbled of many things, but most of "Mrs. Wingit's work, which he must git up to do." And then Mabel would have to hold the little thin form in the bed, for he would endeavor to arise, as he would speak of the whippings he would receive if he didn't obey her hard commands. And Mabel

would soothe him into calmness, with her tender hand upon his hot forehead and her loving voice in his ear. But when his fever burned itself out and left him, he frightened Mabel with his deathly look, and she called the Irish girl, who was a kind-hearted but ignorant creature. But Mabel thought her poor companionship was better than none. The girl was so frightened that she said she would go for the doctor at once; and Mabel told her she might go for him and for Mrs. Wingate. As the girl started out of the door she saw a boy on his way to the fair, and she sent word by him that Tom was worse, and Mabel wanted her to come home. But Mrs. Wingate refused to come. She was just then on her way home with Harriet to don the gorgeous apparel with which to vanquish Dr. Dean. Could she give up the scene of triumph she had pictured to herself so many times for the sake of a poor pauper? No. She refused to go. Dr. Dean went, however; and with his first look at Tom's face he knew the truth. The boy was dying; but as the doctor, who had been one of the very few who had always spoken kindly to him, bent over his bed, Tom looked up and smiled, and seemed to remember some of those kind words; for he said to him in such a poor, weak voice that they both had to bend their heads very low to hear him:

"I said I wished I was a hething, and you—" Here his voice quite failed him, and he stopped a minute; but pretty soon he went on, "And you said there was brighter days for me."

"There are, Tom. God knows I believe it; and you are very near them now."

"You said—you said,—" Again he paused for a moment. "You said it was a long lane that never turned, and I guess—I'm most—to the endin' of it."

"Yes, Tom; and I believe a kinder friend than you have ever known on earth is waiting to lead you into that brighter pathway so near you." And here the doctor's voice was very low and gentle.

"Will you ask that Good Friend for His love, for His love to go with you, Tom? Do you know the prayer, 'Our Father who art in Heaven?'"

"No; nobody ever teached me. But I guess—" Here his voice died entirely out; but, as he brightened up a moment after, he tried again to finish the sentence—the last speech he ever gave to a gainsaying world, that had thought so very little of poor Tom's remarks:

"I guess He'll know—that I never—had nobody—to tell me—"

The sentence was never finished here; but I trust it was heard and received due attention from Him, in whose gracious sight a sparrow does not fall unnoticed.

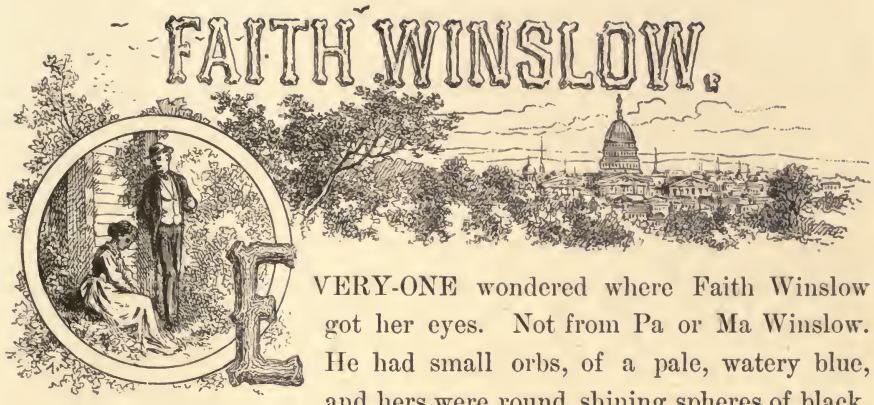
When Mrs. Wingate returned from the fair for the welfare of the heathen, Tom was not there—only the poor robe he had cast aside forever. The immortal spirit, that had been intrusted to her care, had gone to carry the message of how she had used that trust to the throne of God.

But Tom's labor is ended now, and he sleeps very peacefully beneath the small white stone Mabel Dean placed above his grave.

It was just after Mabel's marriage, which took place about two months after Tom's death, that Mrs. Wingate, disgusted, resigned her position as President of the Female Dorcas Society.

FAITH WINSLOW.

FAITH WINSLOW.



EVERY-ONE wondered where Faith Winslow got her eyes. Not from Pa or Ma Winslow. He had small orbs, of a pale, watery blue, and hers were round, shining spheres of black, very like a doll's. No, not from either of these did Faith inherit those large, beautiful eyes. I fancy some ancestor of hers — no matter how many centuries back — had a wonderful poet or artist soul, and baffled, yearning, went down to the grave unsatisfied with life, and so his soul, not resting, looked out on the world again from the eyes of Faith Winslow.

They were seeking eyes, — eyes that were always asking something, — wonderful, appealing eyes. Sweet eyes, seeking for something beautiful. What did they find in the old farm-house to satisfy them?

In the best room there was a striped rag carpet, six yellow flag-bottomed chairs, embellished at the back with an impossible rose with blue petals, such as never haunted a sane horticulturist's wildest dreams. A table, with a brown linen table-spread, of Ma Winslow's own weaving, on it, on which was a small dictionary, an almanac, a Bible, and a Methodist hymn-book. A mantel, with two shining brass candlesticks, separated by a snuffer-tray. Four stiff, green paper cur-

tains at the windows. And on the spotless walls a certificate, framed, bearing witness to her parents' lawful marriage. And a mourning piece, — a woman clasping a very mature child to her elaborately-trimmed breast, and both shedding very large-sized tears on a monument. That was all. Then there was the spare bed-room, with a marvelously high feather-bed on it. A kitchen, with a bed-room adjoining it, where Mr. and Mrs. Winslow nightly slept the sleep of the just. And two chambers above, in one of which Faith dreamed her wonderful dreams; and in the other, John Grey, the hired boy, burned his nightly candle in the search of knowledge. Only a farmer's son, hired to a farmer, but you would find on the little stand at the head of his bed elementary books in Greek and Latin among the pile of other school-books. The education he had received at the district school had only fired his love for, and determination to obtain, an education. And the flame burned silently, and grew with what it fed upon.

It was a lovely evening in early May, and Faith and John Grey were sitting on the porch amidst the budding lilacs and sweet-briar roses. She is cutting carpet rags, but her fingers are rather idle, so her mother thinks, looking at her over her spectacles from the window, where she sits making a cheese bandage.

"I declare, Faith, when do you think you will ever get that ball done at that rate? and there are forty pounds to cut before spinning comes on. Now, when I was your age ——"

And then followed a long recital of the days' work she used to turn off — wonderful successes of skeins of yarn, and yards of weaving.

Faith's eyes were bent earnestly on her mother's face as she talked, and her mother thought her greatly impressed by her conversation. That good lady, not being a soul linguist, could not translate the pathetic, wistful language of the soft eyes lifted to hers. Had she understood it, she would have read Faith's questioning whether life

were really worth having that held nothing but this endless drudgery, this treadmill-round of wearisome toil.

Her mother bustled off to the dairy-room with her cheese bandage, and Faith took up her work again with a long sigh.

John heard it,— indeed, an observant person could hardly be in their society for five minutes without knowing that John Grey did see and hear everything relating to Faith Winslow. He looked up quickly from his work,— it was a harness he was mending with deft, brown fingers.

But Faith did not look at him. Her large eyes were bent upon the West, whose glowing sunset light was being fast hidden from her by the towering mountain range that shut in the valley. What was in that great, wonderful, beautiful world that lay beyond? How narrow and barren the life about her seemed to her to-night!

Must her whole life be passed in farm drudgery, in the exercise of mere brute strength? Must her highest aim and enjoyment be the doing of an extra hard day's work of spinning, cutting carpet rags, or piecing calico bed-quilts?

She looked about her, at the little farm-house that brightened the valley. Their inmates all seemed content,— happy. Why should she be so different from them all, so restless, discontented? Faith was not aware of it; so very humble was she and self-distrustful, she did not know in what consisted that strange barrier — felt, but scarcely recognized,— separating her so entirely from those about her.

In the first place it was her beautiful nature, and then she had separated herself still farther from her surroundings by her superior culture.

An aunt, half-sister to her mother, the child of a later and wealthier marriage, had spent one summer at the farm-house when Faith was thirteen, three years before our story commences. And to Faith's dreamy, imaginative mind the three months that this elegant, cultured woman was in her home was Paradise.

This aunt possessed a nature kindred to Faith's, and she saw with delight the young girl's growing desire for knowledge, and taught her while she was there, leaving her books to study and read when she was gone.

Oh, what a new world of beauty and delight she caught glimpses of during that enchanted season! But the aunt had seemed to pass utterly from her life, for she had married a very wealthy man two years before, and was living in the south of France, her husband being ordered there by his physicians for the benefit of his health. And Faith thought her aunt had forgotten her. Poor Faith, sitting on the porch! Lower and lower the sun sank, — deeper and darker the shadows of the green old mountain stretched toward her. Would she ever surmount the higher mountains that separated her from the unknown world of beauty, culture?

Faith did not note the clear, grey eyes that were watching her so intently. But she spoke out, with another deep sigh:

"How dark it seems here, John!"

"Yes; the mountain shuts out the sunset quickly."

"If I were a man, I would follow that light outward. I wonder you can be content here, John. If I were a man, I would never stay here, I would ——"

"You would walk through the mountain?"

John said this in a light tone, but with rather of a sad heart, to think the one he worshiped so entirely seemed so willing to have him leave her. A desert would be delightful to him, if Faith Winslow was there. But he went on, simply:

"You know my father was indebted to yours; and your father wanted my work, so I came."

"When you wanted to go to school so, — it is too bad, John."

"Oh, no," said John, cheerfully; "school can wait for awhile; I am only eighteen, and I am studying, too, all the time."

John did not make himself out a martyr. He thought he was simply doing his duty. That was a very strongly-marked trait in John Grey's nature — a loyal desire to do the first and nearest duty that presented itself to him. To do all things faithfully, earnestly, as in the sight of the Lord. He was not a believer in fate at all; he relied upon God and his own right hand, and he was willing to toil valiantly.

John, too, was looking now at the great, grim giant that seemed to delight to tower up and hide all the glory of the western sky, and there was a light in his grey eyes that made his earnest face handsome.

"One step at a time will take one over the mountain; I shall find a way."

"I know you will. The world has need of just such good, patient workers as you are, John. I wish I were half as good as you, — as contented and cheerful."

John's face flushed.

"Oh, it is different with you, Faith. It never seems as if anything is half good enough for you. You are so dainty, so different from anyone else."

Poor John, his face was growing so very red, and his fast-beating heart made the words so very difficult to speak. But at that moment was heard a loud, decided knocking at the front door, and Faith ran away to open it.

"Could you kindly direct me to Farmer Ford's?"

Faith answered him, looking up shyly into the tender, smiling, passionate eyes. For they were eyes that could put on every soulful emotion to entrance a little beauty of a country girl, as well as to beguile a royal duchess. And in fact as Clancy March looked down into those large, wonderful eyes, he thought he had never in his life beheld so rare and perfect a type of beauty.

He was told that Farmer Ford might take a boarder for the

summer. He was rather out of health, and wanted a quiet place where he could have plenty of quiet, out-door exercise and pure air. Perhaps he could obtain board here, if so he would look no further.

THE INQUIRY.

Faith ushered him into the parlor. Farmer Winslow was called.

That good old gentleman was in a very bad humor. Six lengths of fence had just been broken down "by them infernal cattle of Neighbor Ford's."

When Faith told him the gentleman's business, he said:—

"I'll be shot if I have him in the house five minutes."

But he little understood the fascinations and power of Clancy March. In half an hour it was all settled, and the young man became an inmate of the old brown homestead.

Oh, those long summer months, Eden hours so sweet—so bitter sweet to the tender, impulsive heart of Faith Winslow! All she had dreamed of in her ideal world, of art, culture, beauty, he realized to her. What poems he read to her in the shady old porch; what sweet love songs he sang to her in the twilight shadows; what more wondrous idyls of love and tenderness she could read in his admiring glances.

Did Clancy March know just how dear he was becoming to her? Yes, I think he knew it fully. He was one who delighted in his power of winning love and admiration. And Faith—why he had never, never met, in all his going to and fro about the earth, just such a sweet, original little beauty as Faith Winslow. In fact, she touched the heart of Clancy March as no woman had ever done—this little rustic maiden.

He thought of it often upon his pillow in the spare bed-room of the Winslow farmhouse. Not in the night watches. No, he slept well and soundly. But just after he would lay his head upon his pillow, after spending the short, beautiful summer evening reading to her. With those wonderful eyes bent with a woman's appreciation and a child's trust and innocence upon his face.

"If she were only rich now; but he couldn't afford to throw away his future for the sake of this little country girl. He should get over this fancy, he always did. There was that Italian girl Beatrice; he had fancied himself in love with her that winter in Florence. And then there was Madame Le Noir, that young French widow, and American girls dating back to the daughter of his nurse. Of course,

there were none of these like Faith; there was a soul, a depth to her nature, a spirituality to her loveliness, that none of these had possessed. But then, he should get over it."

And he would fall asleep so quickly after settling this important fact in his mind that he had really no time to think whether Faith would "get over it" as easily. For he could not fail to see how entirely she was giving up her heart — her very life, into his hands. And so the long, sweet summer hours passed away, and it was the last night of his stay at the old farmhouse.

Faith was sitting on the low parlor doorstep, he leaning against the rough pillar that supported the vine-shaded portico, looking down upon her.

"I shall miss my little companion very much. The city will seem dull and empty to me without you, Faith."

She looked up into his face.

He saw it all, all those eyes held; such sorrow, such a passionate, loving reverence for him, for I verily believe had he asked her at that time to give up her life for him, she would have lain it down gladly. I think he read it all, but he only said, as he stepped down and laid his hand lightly on her forehead:

"What are you going to do with all this brain when I am gone?"

She did not answer him, for she could not. She turned her head, but he could see tears drop silently down upon her clasped hands.

He saw them, and they touched his heart as I think it had never been touched in his whole life before. But he had sufficient manliness not to show that he noticed them, and he went on speaking rapidly:

"I wish I dare tell you, Faith, how bitter this parting is to me. If it were in my power, I would never leave my little girl here, if she would go with me. But I am not worthy of you. Some better man than I am will win your love, and then you will forget me, and I, far away from you, shall try to forget you and cannot."

Words said only to free himself from rather an embarrassing position, but which were to prove truer than he thought. For, in the years that came after, how often did those beautiful eyes rise before him, with all the wondrous meaning they held. When he was deceived in what he most trusted, when he lost faith in all humanity, and thought there was no such thing as disinterested love upon earth, then he thought of the boundless faith in him those sweet eyes expressed; then he thought of the soul of love, faithful, almost worshipful devotion, that he left there in the porch of the old homestead. Yes, left. For even as he looked down upon Faith, with his selfish, worldly heart beating faster than it ever had before, he thought:

"I can never sacrifice my future for the sake of a little country girl. There is Miss Wallingford with her hundred thousand. To be sure she was rather faded, and her eyes were very pale and colorless, but her diamonds had expression and sparkle. No, he couldn't sacrifice his future."

"Faith," and he turned to the still, white little figure at his side, "I want you to keep 'Elaine,' that little illustrated volume, you know, that you fancied so. I will leave it on the table of my room, for we shall not meet in the morning, I leave so early. I want you to keep it always, for my sake. Do you remember that little song in it? They seem to me the saddest, truest words in the whole world."

And then, looking down upon the fair, pale face, he repeated, and he felt them deeply enough to add a passion and tenderness of his own to the mournful sweetness of the song:

"Sweet is true love, though given in vain, in vain,
And sweet is death, who puts an end to pain;
I know not which is sweeter — no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be.
Love, art thou bitter? welcome death to me.
Oh, love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away.
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay;
I know not which is sweeter — no, not I."

"Do you remember them, Faith? I read them to you that day in the boat."

"Yes, I remember them. Good-bye, Mr. March!"

She had risen, and stood pale as death, but calm and quiet as she had never been in all her past — the perfect, pathetic calm of despair.

He took the hand she held out in both his own, and then he stooped down.

"We are such good friends, you might let me kiss you once — for the first and last time, Faith."

But she drew her face away with a gesture almost of abhorrence.

"Stay one moment, Faith, I want to tell you ——"

But she was gone through the hall, the kitchen; he heard her footsteps; then he heard the chamber door shut, and he was indeed alone, save for a memory that would always go with him where he went.

Blinded, dizzy, stumbling, Faith started to climb the stairs. She was not given to fainting, but after shutting the chamber door, and thinking how very steep and straight the staircase was, she remembered nothing further till she found herself on the lounge in her own room, and John Grey bending over her.

"I thought I wouldn't call your mother, Faith. I was afraid it would frighten her. You are tired out; you have worked too hard, Faith."

If Faith had looked up into John Grey's face, she might have read the true reason why he had not called her mother; why he had shielded her from all troublesome notice and inquiries. I am afraid that John — good Christian youth as he was — was cursing Clancy

March for a villain in his inmost heart. For he well knew what it was that was tiring Faith. But Faith did not look up; she only said, wearily:

"Yes, I am tired, John — tired out."

"Well, you shall rest now; I can help your mother. I can work in-doors as well as out, you know."

"YES, I AM TIRED, JOHN."

"Yes, I know just how good you are, John."

She raised herself wearily from the lounge. And John Grey, suddenly recollecting that he was in Faith's room, gave a reverent, awe-struck look about him, and went softly out. He paused, however, at the door.

"There isn't anything I can do for you, Faith?"

"No, John; nothing."

What of the days that passed after Clancy March had left the old homestead? At first she thought the world had come to an end. Then there were the long days and nights of dull, dreary pain, and longing, and despair. And then came a strength and a patience wrought out of suffering.

Clancy March did not harm Faith. Indeed, I am fully persuaded that no power upon earth can harm people unless it is their own ill-doing. At this time — the most eventful in her life — this aunt we have spoken of, who was now a childless widow, offered to send Faith away to school. One year ago she might have refused; so strong are the chains of habit and blind contact; the coarse food of Egypt might have satisfied her hunger sufficiently to keep her from the unknown wilderness. But now she hailed it — welcomed it eagerly. And for the next three years Faith Winslow attended the best schools in the country.

Clancy March had followed his heiress to Switzerland, where she was journeying with a gay party; while John Grey, in a Western village, was working hard — studying hard — as became a penniless young lawyer.

It was on an ocean steamer that Faith Winslow and Clancy March met again. He had not married his heiress. Something — some lover's quarrel — had separated them shortly before the time appointed for their bridal, and he seemed not sorry to be rid of the affair, so his friends thought. Just about this time a rich bachelor uncle had died and left Clancy his heir. So he had taken life easily, or at least had made strenuous efforts to do so — wandering about wherever inclination led him.

But wherever he went — amid Alpine snows or Southern roses — one memory went with him; and, at last, it was that very memory that led him on the *Scotia*, homeward-bound. One day — it was the

third day out, but the first upon deck, for he had been a victim to that most miserable affliction, sea-sickness — Clancy March was leaning upon the railing, looking down into the ocean depths, and thinking.

"Pshaw! what a fool I am!" he said, at last, emphatically to himself. "No doubt she is married years ago; and if she is not, these eight years of rustic surroundings and seclusion on her part — and of culture and the best society on mine — have separated us more widely than ever. And yet, here I am, giving up all the ease and beauty of a life abroad, just for the chance of seeing those wonderful eyes again." And then a very keen memory of just how those sweet eyes looked as he last beheld them, swept over him. "Poor little Faith." Unconsciously to himself these last words were spoken aloud.

And a lady just passing, on the captain's arm, looked full into his face, for one brief moment, and then passed on. She did not recognize him evidently, but he knew her at once.

There could never be two pair of such eyes in the whole world — glowing, tender, fathomless. Those were the eyes that he had dreamed of by night and by day.

As the captain returned from the ladies' cabin, whither he had escorted his passenger, Clancy sought him — he was an old friend of his.

"Who was that lady with you a moment since?"

"That! oh, that was Miss Winslow, the beauty, the heiress. Where had he been not to have heard of her? She had been the belle — the rage — at Florence, Rome, Paris, for the past year."

"Mr. March had been in Germany for the past year. Where was the lady's home?"

"In Washington; but the aunt who had adopted her, and left her her heiress, had died there, and she had been abroad with an old friend of her aunt's. Did he want to be presented?"

"Yes, that evening."

Captain Duncan was a good-natured man, exceedingly happy in his domestic relations, and he had a strong penchant for making matches, and before he left Clancy he volunteered the information that Miss Winslow had refused a count, a marquis, and no end of foreign nobles; and it was supposed that she was keeping her heart and her fortune for some American. He ended with the hint that, perhaps, possibly Mr. March might turn out to be the fortunate individual.

"Mr. March could not be bold enough to entertain such hopes." This to the captain.

But I think, for many and many a long day, life had not seemed so bright and fair to Clancy March as it did when Captain Duncan moved away, and left him alone with his reverie. Had she, indeed, been faithful all these years to that old love? The more he thought of it the more probable it seemed. He had boundless faith in his own charms and fascinations. If it were, indeed, so, she should be rewarded now for her long and patient waiting. Fate had thrown them together for that express purpose, it would seem. He was a devout believer in Fate — most men of his class are.

When the good-natured captain, with much *impressment*, introduced his two most wealthy and distinguished passengers, the lady put out her hand, calmly, and said:

"An introduction is unnecessary; Mr. March and I are old acquaintances."

"Then you remembered me, Faith. Miss Winslow, I knew you at once."

"Your countenance looked familiar to me this afternoon upon deck, and as soon as Captain Duncan called your name I remembered you at once."

He was rather flushed and ill at ease for the first few minutes, but she was perfectly cool and unembarrassed. And, oh, how beautiful

— beautiful she was! All the possibilities of promise and loveliness that he saw in the bud eight years before had blossomed, and the rare beauty of the perfect flower was glorious beyond anything he had ever dreamed.

It was rather of a long voyage, for the weather was unfavorable, but Clancy March blessed each detaining breeze; hailed it as an angel of mercy.

Ah, those beautiful seeking eyes, they had looked upon so much beauty, grandeur! Her life had been so full and complete. You could see by them that "her royal soul lived royally."

But with all her beauty and accomplishments, her wide and varied culture, she had retained the unaffected frankness of a child. The very soul of truth and innocence still looked out of those eyes — those sweet eyes — that held him with such a spell.

Yes, Clancy March was in deadly earnest now. He loved her, loved her so, that to do him justice, if she had lost every penny of her fortune, it would have made no difference to him; he would have married her all the same, as he was going to, now. Yes, he was fully determined that he would make her his wife; his mind was fully settled upon that point.

But her manner sometimes puzzled him. Always ready to converse with him about books, authors, and nature; ready always to listen to any new thought he brought her from any new or old writer — ready to welcome it with her quick appreciation; ready to walk with him upon the sunlit or starlit deck; to sing with him his favorite songs — still, at the end of their voyage he somehow seemed to come no nearer to her than he was the first day. She seemed to meet him with calm, unaffected friendliness, no more. But those who are very much in love are rarely wise, and never patient. And then such firm hopes did he build upon the old love! So one evening — it was their last evening on the *Scotia*, for they expected to reach

home the next day — he purposely brought her to sing that song he had repeated to her on the porch of the old homestead: —

"Sweet is true love, though given in vain, in vain."

If he had expected the song would cause her to display any emotion, he was mistaken; she sang it through in her sweet, clear voice, with no more expression than the words demanded. But as she finished the last line they were alone, for false news of land in sight had drawn all the passengers on deck. He bent over her, and said, passionately: —

THE OLD SONG.

"Faith! Faith! do you know how I love you? Do you know that I have waited for you all these long years? I could not love any one else; your sweet eyes rose between me and any other woman's face.

"Then you have tried to love others, it seems."

"Faith, don't speak to me in that tone, unless you wish to drive me mad. Have you no pity? You loved me once, Faith."

If he had not been so terribly excited I hardly think he would have said that, however strong were the hopes he had built upon it. But she looked up at him, full in the face, with her true, earnest eyes: —

"Yes; when you left me, my heart — my rash, undisciplined heart — was almost breaking."

"You can learn to love me again? Tell me! — don't break my heart by saying 'No!'"

He was in earnest, terribly in earnest; his face was white to his lips with his emotion. But the delicate rose-hue on her cheeks neither paled nor deepened, and there was a look in her eyes as they met his which he could not really translate.

Ah, how well he could remember when his lightest glance could bring up a flood of tell-tale crimson to the fair cheek, and cause the white lids to droop over those beautiful eyes! Her manner puzzled him and discouraged him. He was fearful what her answer might be, in that particular mood of hers.

"Mr. March," she commenced.

But he checked her next words by saying, hastily: —

"Don't answer me now, Faith. In one month I shall be in Washington, and then I will come for your answer."

I think he was confident that a further study of his perfections must needs insure his success. Whether Faith had a desire to answer him then and there or not, it was rendered impossible by the passengers re-entering the cabin, and one of her gentleman admirers coming up and begging her for a song. And from that time she had no further opportunity of speaking to Mr. March alone. They reached home the next day.

It was just one month from that day that Clancy March reached Washington. As he hurried through the streets to his hotel he almost ran against a gentleman who was conversing with another at a street corner. He replied good-humoredly to Clancy's apology, and as he did so, Clancy thought there was something strangely familiar in the clear grey eye and the handsome, determined profile. The other gentleman turned, and, as he saw Clancy, he seized his hand

with extravagant demonstrations of delight. It was an old friend of his, and a traveling companion for months. The tall stranger bowed slightly, and walked away.

"Who is that man?" asked Clancy, looking after him.

"Why didn't I introduce you?" asked his friend, regretfully. "That is Grey, the new Senator from ——. One of our rising men—worked his own way up—rose from the ranks, as soldiers say. Deuced lucky fellow, too! Was married last week to the prettiest girl in Washington—an heiress, too! though Grey is not the sort of a fellow to care for that. But tell me about yourself, old fellow—did you drop down out of the clouds, or how did you get here?"

Clancy March could not disengage himself from his enthusiastic friend at once, but that evening he presented himself at the stately mansion, the home of Faith Winslow. The room he was shown into was one of an elegant suite of rooms, and down the long vista, light-glorified, flower-perfumed Clancy saw Faith herself coming to meet him. She was evidently dressed for some reception or party. Clancy March had thought her peerlessly beautiful in her simple traveling attire on the *Scotia;* but now he could find no words in his mind fit to picture her wondrous loveliness with the waves of white satin and fleecy lace falling about her tall, graceful figure; diamonds shining on her white, perfectly-moulded neck and arms, and gleaming in her dark tresses. And those eyes—those rare, wondrous eyes—as she advanced and held out her hand to him, their sweet light so bewildered him, maddened him, that he uttered no commonplaces of greeting, but, as he took that delicate, jeweled hand he said, pleadingly:—

"Faith! Faith! I have come for my answer."

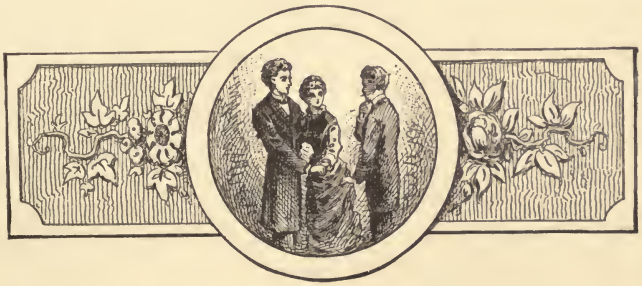
His back was to the door, and the velvet carpet smothered the sound of another approaching footstep. But Faith heard it, and, with the rose-tint deepening in her cheek, she drew her hand from that of Clancy March, and went to the side of the new-comer.

It was the tall, handsome Senator, Clancy had met that afternoon. Faith looked up in his face trustingly, lovingly: —

"John, tell Mr. March why I cannot be his wife."

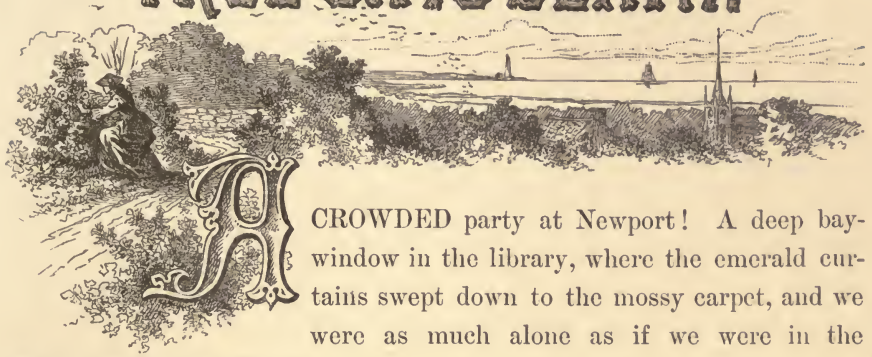
John Grey drew her hand through his arm, very tenderly, but no more lovingly or respectfully than he would have done years before at the old homestead: —

"She will be obliged to decline your offer, because she is my wife — Mrs. Grey."



"HE IS COMING!"

TRUE UNTO DEATH.



A CROWDED party at Newport! A deep bay-window in the library, where the emerald curtains swept down to the mossy carpet, and we were as much alone as if we were in the green depths of a forest.

"Am I so unreasonable, then?" said Murray Hammond, looking down upon me with a queer blending of tenderness and reproach in his clear eyes.

"Yes, you are unreasonable, unjust, manlike," I repeated, with a deeper emphasis on each word.

"Because I remind you of your promise to me and speak of its fulfillment, I am unreasonable, am I?"

"I never made any promise."

"I understood it as such."

"You don't want any other man to speak to me, Murray Hammond."

"I wonder who is unreasonable now?" he asked, keeping his good humor, in a way that was very provoking to an angry woman. "Because I warn you against Col. Harding, and tell you that it is very

disagreeable to me to see you dancing with a man who isn't fit to be in any decent woman's presence—"

"You don't like me to speak to Mr. Churchill either, do you?"

"I have never said so."

"You could find nothing to say to his discredit. He has every qualification to make a woman happy."

"As I spoke I calmly picked the petals of a white rose from my bouquet, and they showered down upon my pink satin dress like extra large snow-flakes.

"Every qualification except the trifling ones of heart and brains," answered Murray.

"He is worth ten hundred thousand," said I, purposely spreading out the sum, instead of saying a million, thinking it would sound larger.

"And I am worth scarcely ten thousand."

"And he admires me very much; so Aunt Isabelle says." Another shower of snow-flakes, this time pink, from the heart of a moss-rose. "She says this romantic idea of love is all nonsense."

"I wish your Aunt Isabella were—" His tone suddenly changed. "Do you know, Margaret," he said, "that it is the knowledge that you have always had such an influence as hers at home that makes me wonder how you can be so noble, have so few faults—"

"So few faults! O Murray!" My lips, that I had tried to keep proudly curved, grew tremulous. We were very near a reconciliation. I did not rebel when the hand that had wrought such destruction to my flowers was gently, but closely imprisoned, to keep it from further mischief.

"And yet, my darling, it makes me tremble for your future. My little girl is so impulsive, so easily influenced by those she loves. It is that influence I fear for her."

"Hush! What a sweet voice!" I cried. Just across the piazza

was the music-room, and the low French window, near which the piano was standing, was open, and the words came to us distinctly, sung by a woman's voice, full of power and tenderness.

Clasp your arms round her neck to-night,
Little Nell!
Arm so delicate, soft, and white,
And yet so strong in love's strange might;
Clasp them around the kneeling form,
Fold them tenderly, close, and warm,
And who can tell
But such slight links may draw her back,
Away from the fatal, fatal track?
Who can tell, little Nell?

Press your lips to her lips of snow,
Little Nell!
O baby heart! may you never know
The anguish that makes them quiver so;
But now, in her weakness and mortal pain,
Let your kisses fall like dewy rain;
And who can tell,
But your innocent love, your childish kiss
May lure her back from the dread abyss?
Who can tell, little Nell?

Lay your cheek on her aching breast,
Little Nell!
To you 'tis a refuge of holy rest;
But a dying bird never drooped its crest
With a deadlier pain in its wounded heart.
Ah! love's sweet links may be torn apart,
Little Nell!
The altar may flame with gems and gold,
And splendor be bought, and peace be sold,
But is it well, little Nell?

Veil her face with tresses bright,
Little Nell!
Hide that vision out of her sight,
Those dark, dark eyes, with their tender light;
Uplift your pure face. Can it be
She will bid farewell to heaven and thee,
Little Nell?
Your mute lips plead with eloquent power,
Her tears fall like a tropic shower—
It is well, little Nell!

Close your blue eyes now in sleep,
Little Nell!
Her angel smiles to see her weep.
At morn a ship will cleave the deep,
And one alone will be borne away,
And one will clasp thee close, and pray,
O little Nell!
Never! Never, beneath the sun,
Will you dream what you this night have done—
Done so well, little Nell!

Long before the song was ended my tears were falling; but Murray should not see them, I said to myself. I turned my head away, and drew my hand from his clasp.

"Do you not see, Margaret, that Heaven sent that song? Sent it to prove to you that hearts cannot be tortured and sold without paying a penalty of woe and guilt."

I purposely mistook his meaning, and said:

"Do you dare to think I could ever be tempted to do wrong?"

"No. God knows I believe you to be innocent as a child. You always seem just like a child to me. I am only afraid they will influence you at home, make your life wretched, my darling."

There was infinite love and pleading in his tone, but I dared not yield to its influence.

"You are very complimentary, Hammond. You seem to have boundless faith in my strength of mind."

The cool, sarcastic tone touched him, I saw; for the color left his face, and his lips, which could be as tender as a woman's, put on the firm, resolute expression they could assume upon occasion.

"It is time, Margaret," he said, sternly, "that you and I come to a full and clear understanding, and, if you have not made any promises, that you should make them. I love you better than anything in the world, better than all the world; and you love me, that I know, for you have told me so; and, if you have not, I have read it in your eyes a thousand times; and that knowledge has made me very patient with you. But there is a limit to all human endurance; and after this night I shall never say a word to you to influence you either way. You must choose for yourself, whether a costly palace, or a

"MUST! MY LORD HAMMOND—"

humbler home and a true, honest love is the most precious to you, and you must choose soon, too."

His arms were folded now, and he looked down upon me with a look of sternness and determination in his blue eyes that I had never seen there before.

"Must! my lord Hammond—"

But I had no time to finish the angry sentence, for the curtain was parted suddenly, and my sister stood before us.

"I have been looking for you everywhere, Maggie," she said. "Aunt Isabelle wants to go home."

I lay awake half the night, but I was up betimes, and in the breakfast-room.

But my Aunt Isabelle had quick eyes.

"What is the matter, Margaret?" she said. "Have you a headache? You look ill."

"She quarreled with my lord Hammond last night, and don't feel an appetite," said Dorothy, breaking her egg. "I saw her look at him like a female iceberg as we came away."

"It is a very good thing if Maggie has quarreled with Mr. Hammond," said Aunt Isabelle, approvingly. "I am glad that my lessons, my advice, rather, is taking effect at last."

"Of course it is a good thing," said Dot, "when Mr. Hammond has only his profession and a little beggarly amount that his mother left him, and Mr. Churchill is worth a million. For my part, I like golden calves. I believe in them. I bow down and worship them with all the rest. But, to talk of something else—something of importance. What are you going to wear at the Fords' ball?"

"I am not going," I replied.

"Not going!" Both Dot and my aunt looked up aghast. "Not going! Why? How? What?"

"I am going to Uncle Willard's to stay a week or two."

"Uncle Willard's!" cried Dot. "Why, you were never there in your life."

"Well, that is no sign that I shall not be there in less than two days. You know what he wrote about aunt Ellinor."

"Aunt Ellinor," cried my aunt. "Just as if the sickness of a crazy old woman should take you from Newport in the height of the season, when we have rented this cottage, too, for the summer."

"I am going," said I, quietly.

"I wouldn't go, if I were you, Maggie," said Dot, "they are people we know nothing about."

"They are your mother's brother and sister, young lady, and the more shame to you and me that we know nothing about them. Here we are within a hundred miles of them, and have never been there since we were babies."

"They are wretchedly poor, aren't they?" said Dot.

"Well, what would we be, young lady, if our debts were paid? What will we be, if we don't happen to fetch a good price in the market? Here we are, using up what little money we have to trick ourselves out, like cattle at a country fair, rushing about from seashore to watering-place, and from watering-place to Washington, just like half the girls we meet at those places, 'marked, like sheep, with figures,' waiting for the highest bidder. I wouldn't talk about anything or anybody being poor, after that."

"You can ridicule my efforts for you, if you like," wailed my aunt. "My brother took your mother, when a mere child, from all her rustic surroundings — wisely, too. I don't say but that they are good enough people, and in very comfortable circumstances, I believe; but I have said, and I still affirm, that uncultivated country people are not proper associates for young ladies in your station."

At this I looked square into Aunt Isabelle's faded, wax-like face, and told her that I thought there was "such a thing as people's natures

being cultivated too much, and all their kindness, and tenderness, and humanity being harrowed down and overgrown by a crop of fashionable frivolity and heartlessness." At which speech, delivered with exceeding clearness of tone, Dot remarked, as I left the room, that "Maggie was getting on her high-horse again."

MY FACE.

In my own room I had it out with myself. I walked straight to the mirror, and commenced brushing out my long hair, as I had a habit of doing in my heroic moments, which I suppose I might give another name, not so pretty. What kind of a face looked back on me? Handsome, pearly complexion, with cheeks and lips rosy with youth and health, now crimson with something else; eyes that were capable of great disdain and great tenderness, quick to assume both expressions, if cause there were; lips, now proudly curved by the influence of an independent spirit made petulant and angry by a fancied wrong, but that could be tremulous with better emotions. It was a face that showed a loving, but impulsive nature, easily wrought upon by surrounding influences, and that needed a strong hand to guide it toward the right, or it might be turned toward the wrong.

Such was the face that confronted me; and I said to it, "Here you

are, with your cheeks red and your eyes sparkling with a fine disdain over heartlessness — and what are you? You are as bad as the worst of them. You love Murray Hammond, and you know it. There is no use to deny it; for now, at the bare mention of his name, your eyes grow softer, just as they do when you are with him, for he always calls out the best in your nature, as surely as Aunt Isabelle calls out the worst. You love him, you trust him entirely, and yet for months you have been holding his love in one hand and the world in the other; the love of a true, tender heart — peace, happiness, rest, against the wealth of a millionaire — glitter, splendor, and show. Last night the scale tipped in favor of Mammon, and how patient he was with you. Will any one else ever be so forbearing, so gentle, and yet so firm, in telling you your faults, so loving in helping you to conquer them? No one! No one! For if you should live a thousand years, no one will ever care for you as he does. Dear Murray!" Here something glittered and fell on my hand. I dashed it away impatiently. "But to be the wife of a poor man, to share a life of care and toil, and to give up all the splendor and high station that is offered to you, and which all the girls about you are dying for." Here was another impatient movement, and I turned away from the glass. "I will go away from it all. I will go to Uncle Willard's, and forget all about it for a month. There will be nothing there to influence me, and when I come back I will decide."

I kept my word, and went to Uncle Willard's. Never shall I forget my welcome.

"Wall, wall! If it don't beat all!" was my uncle's greeting. "Did you ever, Betsey, see the beat on't? How she has grow'd! Got your mother's eyes, though; and for the sake of them, my dear, you'd be as welcome as flowers in May, if we hadn't never know'd you, and you wuzzn't no sort of kin to us. There, Betsey, see that smile. Haint that little Margery right over again? God bless you, my dear! I can't help it."

These last seemingly irrelevant words, spoken in an apologetic tone, I knew referred to the tear that shone in Uncle Willard's honest blue eyes, as I threw both my arms about his neck, and kissed him over and over again, in my impulsive, impetuous fashion. Good, kind Aunt Betsey next received my embraces, and returned them with motherly usury. And then we left the grape-embowered porch, and entered the cool, clean parlor, sweet with flowers, through the open door of which I could see the dining-room, with the tea-table glittering with silver and old-fashioned china, all additional tokens of honest welcome.

"Dear child! we were afraid you wouldn't come, after all," said Aunt Betsey, as she settled me in her most comfortable easy chair, and herself removed my wraps. "It would have been a dreadful disappointment to your uncle. He just worshiped little Margery, as he always called her—your mother, you know, my dear."

"There, Betsey, look at them brown curls, now her bonnet's off. Haint that jest like the pretty head that used to be bobbing about all over the old homestead, and that has laid asleep on my shoulder more than a thousand times?"

"How is Aunt Ellinor?" I said, directly.

"Failin', failin' all the time," said Uncle Willard. "Runnin' down, just like a clock that can't be wound up. Medicine can't wind her up, or she would have been before now, for we have tried everything under the sun; but it's no use. She keeps runnin' down, lower and lower, and she'll stop stun still, I am afraid, before long"; and Uncle Willard ended his words with a deep sigh.

After supper, I asked if I might see the invalid. It was with a beating heart that I followed Aunt Betsey into the chamber. It was a large room, with clean, white floor and white-washed walls, with a high, white-curtained bed and quaint, old-fashioned furniture. There were two large windows looking toward the west, and, in an easy chair, drawn up before one of them, reclined the figure of a woman, so wan,

so thin, that she seemed more the shadow of a woman than a living, breathing human being. She was looking intently into the west as we entered, and she never turned her eyes or noticed us in any manner, but gazed outward steadily, silently. As I drew near, I instinctively followed her gaze out beyond the green fields and pastures, beyond the fringy belt of forest, out upon the wide, mysterious expanse of ocean, plainly visible for miles; for Uncle Willard's house was only a mile inland. She did not notice us in any way, though we stood so near her she might have touched us with one of those thin, bloodless hands that were clasped together in the tight, expectant grasp that one will involuntarily assume when looking for some object most desired and momentarily expected.

"Ellinor," said Aunt Betsey, "some one has come to see you."

She turned her eyes slowly round toward us, with a slight impatience visible in them; and I saw then that she was at least fifty years old, with perfectly white hair, put back from a face that must have been in the past very beautiful, but was now wan, and worn, and eager, as if from long watching; and her eyes had a seeking, longing, wistful look in them, and a patience that was inexpressibly touching.

I stood a little behind Aunt Betsey, and Ellinor did not catch sight of me, and she just glanced at aunt, and then immediately turned to the window again, and put up one of her thin hands to shade her eyes, as she gazed far out on the ocean.

"I thought I saw him. I was sure he was coming." This she said to herself, and as if she had entirely forgotten the presence of any one but herself.

"Ellinor, see if you know who this is," and taking my hand, Aunt Betsey drew me forward, before the easy-chair.

Obediently and patiently the invalid turned her eyes toward the speaker, and then rested them on my face. For the first time a faint gleam of interest and meaning flashed across her countenance.

"Little Margery, where have you been all day?" she said.

"It is little Margery's daughter," said Aunt Betsey. "Don't you remember little Margery married, and came back here visiting, with her two little babies, and died here?"

I had taken one of the thin hands in mine; but before Aunt Betsey had finished, the invalid drew it away, and shaded her eyes again, from which all expression had vanished save expectancy, and looked out—out over the water.

"I am sure I saw him. I think he will come to-night," she murmured.

"It is no use," said Aunt Betsey to me, as we went down the dim, winding stairway into the pleasant sitting-room. "I thought, may be, seeing you would rouse her, but it is no use."

"Wont you tell me about her, Aunt Betsey? What made her so?"

"It is a long story; but let me get my knitting-work, and we will take our chairs out into the porch, and I'll tell you now, while your uncle is doing the barn chores, and Hannah is washing the dishes."

So we took our chairs out into the shadow of the grape-vine. Truly, as Aunt Betsey prophesied, she made it a long story. But I will not quote her words. I will relate the story as shortly and plainly as possible. It is a story as old as love and womanly caprice, as sad as error and vain repentance.

When my father was a young man, he went down into the country to spend the summer, to see about a large landed estate that had fallen to him on the death of his father. He obtained board at my grandfather Pryne's, or rather at my Uncle Willard's, for grandfather had died some years before, leaving his great farm, then in a wild state, to his son Willard, and the family consisted of Willard, Ellinor, and little Margaret, the only child of grandfather Pryne's second marriage.

Little Margaret was a wonderfully beautiful child, the pet of the

household; and her extreme beauty and sweet disposition soon caused her to be a great favorite with the young boarder. As there were no educational privileges in that then out-of-the-way place, he offered to give the child lessons during his stay; and as Ellinor requested permission to share the lessons, he readily complied with her request. Ellinor, who was about eighteen at this time, was betrothed to a young sailor, to whom she was passionately attached. But she was a woman, and what woman of eighteen, beautiful, full of life and spirits, can refrain from testing her power over the heart she holds dear.

So, when Richard Wright, her lover, came to visit her one morning, and found her with the handsome young stranger over their books — he was bending over her, explaining some questions to her, and Margery had left the room for the instant; and when Ellinor read his annoyance in his face, what was it but womanly vanity or caprice that made her, after that, when they were alone together, try to make him think that she and the young stranger were attached to each other? He left at last in hot anger, which somewhat alarmed her. "But, never mind," she said; "he will come back again in the evening, and then I will explain all and ask his forgiveness." But he did not come. The next day she said, "He will surely come, of course he will; for to-morrow he sails." But he did not come. She was in a fever of excitement. At nightfall, unable to stay in the house, she started down to the seashore, to a favorite haunt of theirs, hoping he might, at least, go there. Before she went she sent little Margery to a rose-bush, that was a favorite of her lover's, to get a rose to put in her hair. He liked to see white roses in her dark curls. But she could not wait for the child's loitering steps. He might get tired of waiting for her; so she hastened down to the old rock on the beach. Alas! there was no one there — nothing but the cold moonlight on the waters. Next day news came that Richard Wright had embarked on a strange ship, and had gone no one knew whither. And after a brain fever, so violent that her

life was despaired of, Ellinor recovered, to be the woman she was, a shadow of her former self—watching, waiting, looking for the ship that never came back! At first she would wander through the house, and down to the shore, where she would stay for hours, with her eyes strained out to sea. But as years rolled away she became unable to

WATCHING AND WAITING.

walk to the shore, and she would slowly creep up the long stairs to the west chamber, as they called it, and stand by the window for hours, gazing out over the water. At last she refused to come down at all, and remained there, looking forever for the ship that had most likely sunk beneath the waves, for no news was ever heard of it.

Little Margaret, my mother, was dear to Uncle Willard as the very apple of his eye; but when Aunt Ellinor recovered, to be the wreck that she was, his very love for little Margaret led him to consent to the offer my father made, to put the child at school, and give her as fine an education as the country afforded. Uncle Willard was young and unmarried, and poor then, for the farm, which now was a fine property, was then hardly able to supply the necessities of life. There was no female society near and no schools; and, with Ellinor in that state, how could he refuse? So he let his darling go, to fit herself for a teacher, he thought, and so escape the drudgery of farm life. But she never taught, for, at eighteen years of age, she left school, to become the wife of my father.

Uncle Willard had married in the meantime, and finally grew rich and prosperous. My father and mother spent the first years of their married life abroad. But shortly after their return, while I was a baby, my mother's health failed, and she was ordered by her physicians into the country. She returned to the old homestead, to which her heart had so often yearned during her pleasant life abroad. Soon after her arrival she was attacked by a low fever, prevalent at the time, and died before her husband could get to her side. My father followed her in less than a year, leaving his two orphan babies to the care of his sister Isabelle, with whom we had lived ever since.

Just as my aunt finished the story, Uncle Willard's voice was heard in the kitchen, and Aunt Betsey left me alone.

The glow all faded from the sky, and, one by one, the stars came out, a softer, holier light, in which we may read our souls, when the earth is hushed to such stillness that we may listen to low voices unheard in the garish glare of day. I am always impressible, and I believe I thought some good thoughts there on the old brown doorstep, amongst the summer roses. Indoors came softly to my ears the loving voices of those old lovers; and up in the chamber above me I knew was

that image of deathless constancy. How far off and puerile seemed the atmosphere of vanity and worldliness in which I had moved so lately; of what infinite value seemed to me to be truth, honor, love.

Restful and sweet was my life there for the next two months, for my fortnight grew into eight weeks. I went out into the hay-field with Uncle Willard, explored the fragrant depths of the great, friendly-looking barns with him, and patted his sleek, mild-eyed Alderneys on their honest heads. I salted his sheep and fed his chickens; and every act of mine was good in his eyes, my likeness to my mother so glorified and endeared me to him.

But, above all, it was my pleasure to go up to the far-off, quiet chamber, and sit for hours with Aunt Ellinor. Although she seldom spoke to me or looked at me, they thought, and I thought, that my presence seemed to quiet her, in her more restless moments. In that darkened mind, so remote from our comprehension, some shadowy remembrance of the child she loved may have been awakened, although she never mentioned her name after that first night.

Sometimes I would carry her flowers I had gathered in my walks with Uncle Willard. She would always take them in her hands, and, perhaps, look at them a minute, and then they would drop unnoticed at her feet, as her wistful eyes turned again to the west, to the wide waste of waters — boundless they seemed to me, but not so boundless as her faith, as her hope.

But as autumn drew near she failed visibly. It seemed as if her mind, her restless, eager mind was wearing out her frail body. It was upon the first day of September that the barque Lisbon sailed, and they said she was always worse during these days. At last, during the latter part of August she was obliged to keep her bed entirely; but she would have it drawn out into the room, where, from her pillow, she could watch the far-off horizon line, where the water melted into the sky.

The first day of September was one of the most perfect I had ever seen; and in the afternoon Uncle Willard, Aunt Betsey, and I walked down to the lower orchard to see what splendid apples Sam Hastings, the hired man, was gathering from the new grafts that had never borne before.

We went up to Aunt Ellinor's room before we started, to see if she wanted anything; but she lay, as usual, with her eyes bent upon the west, and did not notice us in the least.

We were gone, perhaps, an hour, and, on returning to the house, I found a rose, that had strangely blossomed again, upon a rose-bush that stood out in the corner of the meadow, near a heap of stones and bricks. I wondered how this rose-bush grew so far away from the house; but Aunt Betsey said the original house had stood there, and added, "That is the very bush that Ellinor sent Margery to get a rose from just thirty-two years ago to-night. Richard Winslow used to come through this lot," she said, "and he always picked one of these roses, and brought it to her to put in her hair."

I looked down into the white depths of the flower, renewed by gracious nature to be again so fresh and sweet, and thought of the wasted, sorrowful lives that could never bloom into beauty again — never here; but the very mute lips of the flower I held rebuked me and said to my heart, that the good God, whose servant nature is, and who is therefore above nature, must somewhere — somewhere in His mercy keep some deathless summer, in which the lives so baffled and barren here may blossom into beauty.

When we reached the house I said to Aunt Betsey, "I believe I will go up and see how Aunt Ellinor is."

"Wall, you run right along, my dear, and I will make a good cup of tea for her in a minute, and a little slice of toast, and will come up in a few minutes and bring it."

As I opened the door I started back an instant, in my surprise;

for Aunt Ellinor, who had not left her bed for a week, was up sitting by the open window, through which a flood of the sunset light was pouring. How she had gotten from her bed to the window, so weak as she was, I could not tell. But there she was, and she had opened an old-fashioned chest of drawers, that stood just before her, and taken out of it a crimson shawl, woven in a strange device, that had evidently come from some foreign port. The drawer was open, and, as I glanced into it, I saw great sea-shells, branches of red and white coral, and various trinkets, all of foreign manufacture.

There she sat by the window, in her long white night-dress, and the crimson shawl wrapped around her, looking out as usual over the waters. I spoke to her, and, for the first time since the night of my arrival, she looked up at me, and said:

"Little Margery." And then seeing the rose, which I still held in my hand, she reached out her hand for it, and added, "What made you gone so long after it, little Margery?" And, taking it, she made a movement as if to put it into her hair, which hung loosened and white as snow about her shoulders.

Wishing to humor her fancy, I said, "Let me put it into your hair for you, Aunt Ellinor."

But she drew back with a slight movement.

"No! *He* will," she said. "I think he is coming!" And, dropping the rose into her lap, she gazed far out to sea, with her patient, sorrowful eyes.

As she looked her face grew glorified, triumphant; and she exclaimed, in a voice I did not know, so glad it was, so exultant:

"He is coming! There he is!"

Instinctively, I followed her glad, eager glance and the wave of her wan fingers.

The setting sun lay upon the water, in a long, golden pathway, down which she looked.

"He is coming with his hands outstretched to me! He has forgiven me! He is smiling! O Richard! Richard!"

Still looking into the glorified west, still with her hands outstretched, as if in joyous welcome, with the restful content and rapt-

"OH, RICHARD! RICHARD!"

urous smile on her lips and in her eyes, she essayed to rise, sunk back in her chair—her life's tragedy was ended.

I stayed until after the funeral, and then went back to Newport.

The night after my arrival I was at a party in the same house where my last conversation had taken place with Murray. I saw him standing alone in the same bay-window. The same gay crowd was surging without, the same music was swelling through the rooms. I went up to him noiselessly, and said:

"Murray, wont you speak to me?"

He started and looked down upon me, and then took the hand I timidly extended in both his.

"Did you drop out of the clouds?" he said.

"O Murray! can you forgive?" I almost sobbed.

Whatever his answer was, it was satisfactory. A while after, he asked, softly:

"What has changed my little wild eagle into such a dove?"

"I can't tell you now and here. It is too sorrowful, too sacred," I faltered; "but sometime I will tell you."

It was not until the evening after our marriage-day, however, as the twilight gathered about us, that I told Murray Aunt Ellinor's story, her life and her death, and how it taught me the infinite value and sacredness of love, and that everything else upon earth was as nothing compared to it.

As we re-entered the drawing-room after my story Dot placed a letter in my hand. I opened it, and a check dropped out on to the carpet. The letter was as follows:

"Little Margery, My Dear,—Your Aunt Betsey and me couldn't come to your wedding in body, mine bein' laid up with a spraint knee. But, my dear, our hearts was there, both of 'em. *They* wasn't spraint, and could move off easy; and where should they move to, if it wasn't to little Margery's weddin'? Little Margery, that is as dear to us, Betsey and me, as if she was our own little one that we laid in the churchyard thirty years ago, and has growed up in heaven.

"We have talked it all over, Betsey and me; and who should we give Ellinor's property to, if it wasn't to little Margery? It has been in good hands, and amounts to twenty thousand dollars. I send you the check to-day.

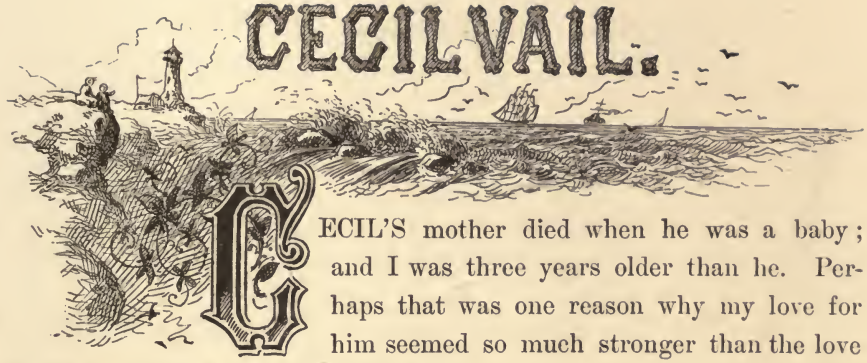
"We, Betsey and me, have got more than we can ever use; and as we hear that your sister, that Betsey and me haint never seen, is about to marry an independent rich man, who should we want to leave our money to, when God sees fit to call us, but to little Margery and the man she has chose? But, please God, that day may be far away yet; for it is a good world, and we love to live in it, your Aunt Betsey and me.

"Now, hoping, my dear, that this letter will find you as happy as we wish you was, which is happy enough for anybody, I will close, by sending of you my love, Betsey's and mine, and telling you what is the truth, that I am always my dear little Margery's true and loving,

UNCLE WILLARD."

A BODY IN THE SNOW.

CECIL VAIL.



CECIL'S mother died when he was a baby; and I was three years older than he. Perhaps that was one reason why my love for him seemed so much stronger than the love of other sisters for their brothers.

I remember, when he was very small, how I used to follow him around, so afraid he would get killed. That was my great fear. There was not a dog in the neighborhood, however well-intentioned and correct in deportment, but I looked upon it as the natural enemy of Cecil. Birds' nests on perilous boughs seemed in league against his white, supple limbs; green plums and apples appeared to be created solely for his overthrow; and the ocean (we lived only half a mile inland) seemed a great, restless, roaring monster, that, in case of his escaping other perils, was constantly watching out for him, calling out to him forever with a great hoarse voice, as the waves swashed against the beach, "Come *down* here, and I'll *finish* you! Come *down* here, and I'll *finish* you!"

He was my thought, my care, and my delight, from dawn till sunset. And he was such a bright, affectionate little fellow, loving me better than any one else.

We had a step-mother, a large woman, with small black eyes and very red cheeks. And my first recollections of her are her wondering aloud many times each day, what would become of us if it wasn't for her. This seemed to be the standing subject of inquiry in her mind. If we had any particular ill-fortune, she would pro-pound the question, as if the misfortune would have been more overwhelming had it not been for her. And on our rare occasions of better fortune she would propound the question triumphantly, as if it were owing to her having an existence that the better state of affairs was brought about. And I remember

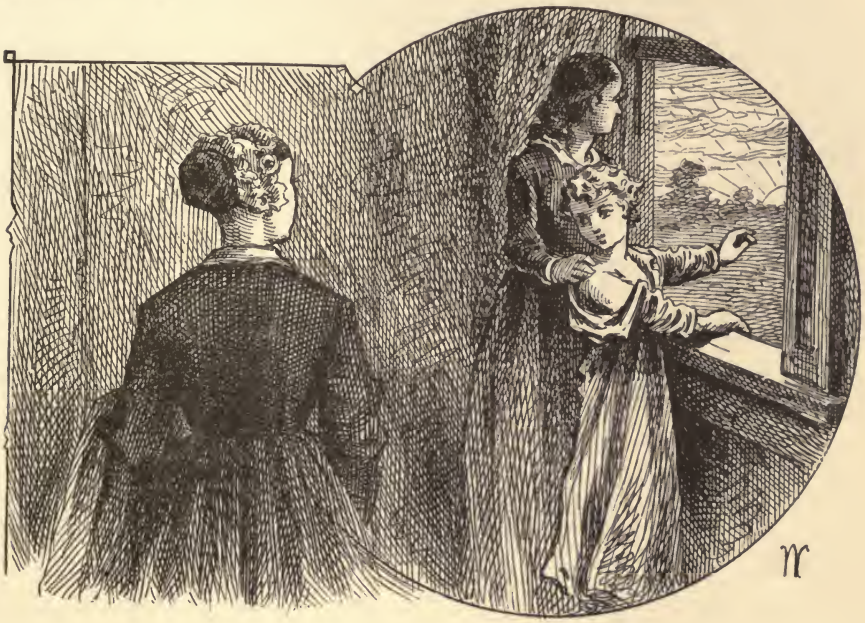
OUR STEP-MOTHER.

that I heard the words so often that I, too, used to think of it a great deal, and wonder, in a childish, quiet way, what would really have "become of us" had it not been for her.

There are two or three remembrances that stand out like pictures against the shadowy background of that far-away time. One is of Cecil's standing by the open window of our sitting-room, looking out on the beauty of the western sky, flaming with the sunset glory of gold and crimson. I can see just how he looked. His little white night-gown had slipped off one round, white shoulder; and I can see just how the bright glow in the sky was reflected in his large, wide-open brown eyes; and how he clasped his hands together in surprise and rapture, as if he had caught sight, for the first time, of some rare, unknown realm of beauty; and how glad his voice was, as he cried·

"Oh, Nora! Mamma! come here! Come here, and see the prettiness up there!"

"You will take your death-cold standing there in the window. Go right up stairs to bed. Oh dear! What *would* become of 'em all if it wasn't for me?"



WATCHING THE SUNSET.

I was quite young, and could not be expected to philosophize; but I remember thinking that I ought to be grateful to think Cecil had some one to keep him from taking his "death-cold." And still I plainly remember that I had an uncomfortable sinking feeling, a sort of lonely heart-ache, that made me creep up stairs, and lie down on the side of Cecil's little crib, and take him in my arms, and tell him stories in a low voice. And I can see now just how large and sorrowful his eyes looked up at me from his little white pillow as I went in, and how they

lit up during the wonderful adventures of Alibaba, and how pretty he looked as he lay asleep at last, with a smile on his lips; and how many times I kissed him, but softly, that I might not awaken him.

TELLING STORIES.

About my father, at this time, there was a mystery. He would remain for days shut up in his room; and then we dared not, for our lives, go near it. And when we would question our step-mother, why we mustn't go into his room, and why he shut himself up so, she would frown upon us darkly, and bid us "ask her no questions."

Sometimes, when she was in a softer mood, she would add, "Poor creeters, what would become of you, if it wasn't for me?" which would plunge me, too, in the same long train of inquiry, and gloomy reflections.

My very first memory of seeing him, was, (and I must have been very young,) I remember, thinking how very handsome he was. I know now, that I had been away, staying with an aunt in the city, and I have a faint recollection of papa's taking me into a darkened room, where there was a lady with a white, beautiful face, and eyes like Cecil's, and her kissing me, and weeping over me, and calling me "her pretty darling."

There were some white lilies in a vase near the couch where she was lying, and though I cannot recollect anything else there was in the room, or how I got there, or where I went from there — though now I know that I went home again with my aunt — still, I never see a white lily, but I am carried back into the dream again of the pale lady, and papa's handsome face as he led me in.

Another dream stands out faintly against the misty obscurity of that last time. It must have been the night before I returned home to stay. I awoke on a sofa in my aunt's room, and she was talking about me.

"Poor little Nora," she was saying, "how sorry I am to leave her; but India is no place for a child."

"No; and with your health, too, the child will be better off at home."

"But such a home," the plaintive voice went on. "How could he ever choose such a woman, his housekeeper, to take the place of our poor lost Edith? It is a mystery I never can understand."

"No one ought to understand it," said my uncle in wrathful accents. "But one thing is certain; Harold is sinking lower and lower into ruin every day."

"I know it — my poor brother!" And here my aunt began to weep, while my uncle, with many loving words, tried to comfort her. As for me, I lay silently brooding over the thoughts their words awakened. I knew they were speaking of my father, for his name was Harold. What was this dreadful place called "ruin" into which he was sinking, so terrible a place that my aunt wept to think of his entering it?

Life again seems a misty dream, and I find myself at home, loving my pretty brother better than anything else, and still haunted by a vague horror and curiosity concerning the ruin connected with my father's name.

With my first clear and distinct recollections of my father, comes the knowledge that he disliked and avoided me. At first, only the dreamy knowledge of the fact was apparent to my childish apprehension, and it was not until long after I became aware what the word "ruin" meant in connection with him, that the reason of his dislike and avoidance became apparent to me. And I thought I was to him, like a visible conscience, and the eyes of my own mother, whom I greatly resembled, looking through mine, reproached him, agonized him with the memory of what he was once, what he might have been, and the wreck he had become now.

But it ended. There was a body found in the snow — a night of horror unspeakable — a day of confusion, with a mystery lying in the darkened parlor — a funeral — a grave into which the falling snow sifted, covering it softly with its pure whiteness. And looking back into that grave now, my only comfort is that God's mercy is whiter than the snow.

There was enough saved for us out of what had been a handsome fortune, to provide us food and clothing, and a home — such as it was. But we were the children of a drunkard — the village children never let us forget that. And one of the bitterest memories of my childhood is seeing Cecil's sensitive lips quiver at their taunting words.

I could endure reproach and upbraiding myself, but Cecil — I cannot remember the time that I did not hold his well-being and happiness dearer than my own, and why should I not? For he loved me, and he was all in the world I had to love. And I had a loving heart; many, many faults it had, but it was a loving heart, I know. And it seemed as if my affections, blown away from every other support to which they had tried to cling, all, all twined about Cecil, my brother — my darling.

On my tenth birthday, an old lady, my step-mother's mother, came

to live with us. I remember it was my birthday, for Cecil asked my step-mother in the morning, "if she wasn't going to bake Nora a birthday cake, as Kitty Snow's mother did?"

And how well I recollect her reply: —

"That she guessed Nora would find that birthdays would come often enough, and bring her trouble enough, without coaxin' 'em along with sweet cakes."

And how well I remember what a horror of birthdays fell upon me then. Mrs. Dagget, the old lady, came while we were talking about this. She was a queer looking little old lady, with a yellow, wrinkled face, and a broad, white border standing out around it. Her first words to us were: —

MRS. DAGGETT.

"I suppose you make your mother an awful sight of work, — don't they Melissa?"

Melissa replied with a great deal of feeling and earnestness, that we did. And then Mrs. Dagget remarked with a groan, that she supposed she should be another trouble to her, but she shouldn't be long, for she couldn't stand it but a few days, "feelin'" as she did then, "so run down, and gone to the stummuck."

And then noticing Cecil's red cheeks, she asked if they wasn't caused by "inwerd fever;" she had lost a child just about his age, and that looked a good deal like him, with "inwerd fever," and he was "buried up in the cold ground."

Which made me shudder, and cling to Cecil's hand more closely. And then regarding my rather shabby gown, she asked her daughter if she supposed one of her old dresses could be fixed over for me? But Melissa could do as she was "a mind to with 'em;" they would all fall to her before long, if there kept up such a goneness at her "stummuck."

This was our first introduction to the old lady, and I do not think that in after days she ever contributed any more to our cheerfulness and happiness than at that first interview. Although, sometimes, with the good feeling that had actuated her in bequeathing her gown to me, she would call Cecil and myself to her side on the Sabbath, and read the Bible to us. But she would always select the chapters in which Israel was doomed, or Job bewailed, or the prophets lamented; and this, together with the fact that she was obliged to stop and spell nearly all of the larger words, detracted much from our enjoyment.

It seemed as if the harder the words were, and the more difficult for her to manage, the more she delighted in them. There was one chapter which she oftenest selected; it was concerning the Israelites journeying through Aroer, which she always called A Roarer, and their encounter with the Horims, which, after spelling many times, she persisted in calling Horners. And I distinctly remember thinking they were strange monsters, half-men and half-beasts, with horns growing out of their foreheads. Cecil and I differing in our views as we talked it over afterward, he, full of a boy's martial instincts, thinking the Horners were connected with a brass band. But this chapter always gave her special delight, although there was not a name in it which was not too much for her, and which did not cause her scholarly overthrow.

At the foot of the old lady's bed stood a hair trunk, so worn, that it looked like a very old dog, that had been scalded, but still

remained faithful to its mistress, guarding the foot of her bed. And sometimes when we had specially pleased her, she would go to this trunk and take out a musty, leather-bound copy of Fox's Book of Martyrs, and show us the pictures. On such nights, I would always have to go and lie down by Cecil till he went to sleep. Many odd questions would he ask me concerning the martyrs, when a sleepiness

THE "SWEET STORY OF OLD."

overcame him he would confound with the dwellers in the wilderness, and in the odd vagaries of dreams, he would call out that a Horner was after him with a red-hot gridiron.

It was not till many years after, that I learned what the Bible, which to Cecil and me was full of terror and weariness, might be to

children. I heard a mother reading to her happy little flock about the child Samuel, the infant Jesus in his mother's human, loving arms, and the divine Saviour, who lived and blest little children. And as their eyes brightened and grew reverent as she read, though it was so long past and gone, tears sprang to my eyes under a vague sense of loss, and of wrong that had been done to my youth.

If any remembrance of my childhood comes to me pleasantly, if I look back upon that time, which should be full of joyful memories, with one emotion of tenderness and delight, that remembrance is of Cecil. All the joy of our gloomy home he brought into it. Mother softened her rather harsh tones to him, and in his sunshiny presence the groans of Mrs. Dagget seemed to be less profound, and partake more of the pensive nature of sighs.

So life ran along till Cecil was seventeen, and I was twenty, and loving him as I did, I don't know whether I was most glad or sorry when news came from our rich uncle in Boston, offering him a place in his counting-room. This uncle, Reginald Vail, was still quite young, unmarried, and very wealthy. And Cecil was delighted to go, for he thought that would be the road to independence, to the home I was to share; for in all his hopeful, loving plans for the future, I was included. Whatever regret I felt was all smothered in my own breast, for I, too, thought that it was an opening into the grand future I had always pictured for my darling. So he went, hopeful and happy, and how did I know he had gone into temptation?

Cecil left us in the autumn, and it seemed, that long, long winter, that I should have died, had it not been for his long, bright, loving letters, which I got two or three times a week. Mrs. Dagget used to groan over the frequency of the letters, and the expense it involved; and my step-mother, a little jealous, I am afraid, of the affection he showed so plainly for me, (although he never forgot to send her some kind message,) would darkly prophesy that she might slave

herself to death for some folks, and that was all the thanks she would get.

And Mrs. Dagget would add, with a groan: —

"I shan't be here long, to see it go on."

What the "it" was to which she referred, she never told, but constantly did she call our attention to the fact that "it was goin' on," and in a reproachful demeanor toward me, she intimated that I was responsible for "its goin' on." There were days when her very clothing seemed to upbraid me; her cap-strings flouted mournfully, her apron-strings hung down reproachfully and rebukingly, and seemed mutely to ask me, more in a spirit of sorrow than anger, "are you not the cause of its goin' on?"

But this was in her better-natured moods. There were times when her cap-border reviled me, her apron-strings menaced me. In these times her doom was prophesied, not as a drooping oracle, but as an avenger. "Then you will see what I have went through, with this goneness at the stummuck, when I am a layin' in the cold, cold ground. Mebby you will have a realizin' sense of what you have lost, mebby you will have reflections."

I think now, that it was a hereditary trait in the Dagget family to foretell their approaching dissolution, although my step-mother's doom was always foretold to us by her, as being caused by her labor for us.

We did not keep any servant, but our work was light, and I was more than willing to do my share of it; but I am certain that very few days passed, and no washing, or baking, or sweeping day, without her talking a great deal, and prophesying that she should kill herself, just as sure as she was alive then, working and slaving for us that day.

And then she would often add, with an upbraiding glance at me, as if I were the main cause of her doom, that then she should be

out of the way, and she supposed I would be glad of it, much as she had always done for me.

I would assure her often, with tears in my eyes, that she did me an injustice, that I knew very well how much she had done for us, and that I was willing, and wanted to assist and help her all I could, if she would only let me, and I would beg of her not to speak in that way.

Sometimes my distressful tone would seem to touch her, for she would say in a softer and more melancholy manner: She guessed it would be better if she was out of the way, and mother, too.

And Mrs. Dagget never failed to add the melancholy prediction, that "I shan't be here long, to see it go on, for my stummuck feels goner and goner every day."

I suppose it was because I was foolishly sensitive, that I felt all this so deeply, and it made me so unhappy. But one cannot change their nature, and I don't really know how I could help it—that while a smile or a pleasant word would make me happy for a day, a frown or a reproachful word would cut to my heart like a knife. It is with an odd feeling of pity for myself that I look back, and remember how miserable and lonely their words would make me through the long, long days. How my heart would sink down so low that it seemed as if it would never be lighter again; yet it always was when I got a letter from Cecil.

As I said, it seemed as if I lived upon his letters; but with the coming of spring, an ambition awoke within me. I had been thinking, ever since Cecil went away, how delightful it would be if I could earn something to give him when he went into business for himself. What a help a few hundred dollars would be! I pondered many impossible plans, and finally I thought of teaching school, and I applied by letter for a school about thirty miles away. A lady who was visiting one of our neighbors, happened to mention it in my

presence, that the school teacher at Randolph, who had taught there for years, had died, and no one had been found to fill her place.

To one of my timid nature, the idea of going out into the great world alone, was full of terror. But it was for Cecil, and that made it endurable. There is no task-master like love, and there is no such willing slavery. I was not needed at home, and I would at least make the effort. I thought I would say nothing to anyone about it until I was certain I could have the school, and one cold, rainy evening in April my fate came to me.

I well recollect what a cold drizzling rain was falling outside, and how a colder, more depressing atmosphere seemed to enwrap us indoors, as we sat at the tea-table. I could not eat much, for it seemed as if I had never been so homesick for Cecil as I had been all day; and at the table, his empty place, opposite, intensified this feeling, so it was with difficulty that I kept back my tears.

There was not much conversation at the table. Only Mrs. Dagget, who had been watching the dismal fall of the rain against the windows, more dismal in the growing gray of the twilight, remarked that "It would be a bad time for a funeral."

Before her daughter could reply to her, a neighbor rapped at the door, and placed a letter in my hands. It contained a favorable answer to my application for the school, and wanted me to come as soon as possible. And now, while a new and untried life was opening before me, I did not expect any sympathy, or encouragement, or co-operation; but I asked my step-mother if she was willing I should go. She replied: —

"I don't know as it makes much difference to me where you go, you'll probably be back on my hands before many weeks are out."

Mrs. Dagget was lighting her pipe, and just at this moment a small coal of fire fell upon her apron. She raised her eyes reproachfully to my face, and said: —

"Can't you put me out?"

I brushed off the coal at once, leaving no further damage than a very small hole in her gingham apron; but she said to me, in a tone of deep rebuke: —

"You no need to have been so afraid of puttin' me out. Mebby you would like some of my clothes to wear off to your school teachin'. But you needn't be afraid; they will all fall to you and Melissa before long, without your settin' of me afire, and not puttin' of me out."

PUTTIN' HER OUT.

So, with what encouragement and inspiration I could glean from these, and similar words, I went out into the world which seemed so large and dreadful to me.

* * * * * * * *

In two weeks time I commenced my duties as teacher. My pupils were quite young, and they seemed to like me, and I soon became quite fond of them. And instead of its being a terrible task I had

undertaken, I even began to love my work, and I spent many happy hours in the little white school-house, nestling in rural quiet.

I found a home in the family of the trustee, Mr. Cook. They lived in a pleasant, old-fashioned farm-house, whose low walls, and broad porches, seemed to be the very abode of neatness, peace, and comfort.

The large front yard was shaded by tall maples, but there was many a sunny spot where white and red roses lifted their sweet faces to the day. And the tall lilac and snow-ball bushes reached up so high that they looked into the windows of my pleasant little chamber.

HAPPY MOMENTS.

And, much to my delight, a robin had built her nest on one of the topmost branches of a white lilac bush, and I could sit in my window and look directly down into its nest, and behold the fears of the tender and faithful mother-bird, and note the attentions of the gallant lover husband, who was very gentle and pleasant to his brown, happy little mate, and yet who seemed to enjoy himself in a gay, masculine way when he was on the wing.

Many happy, dreamy hours did I spend in that pleasant western

window, with perfume and verdure about me—and looking into the western skies, dreaming the dreams of youth. The wonderful, glowing dreams that cast a rosy shadow on the grayest sky when we are only twenty-one.

The family of Mr. Cook consisted of himself, wife, little boy, and hired man, Aspire Dingman. The little boy's name was put down in the Bible, William Henry Harrison, but his father always called him Tippecanoe; the rest of the family called him Tip.

TIPPECANOE.

Tip, aged about six, or six and a half, was in a state of chronic disaffection with the world. Where he imbibed such gloomy views of life I know not, for his father was one of the happiest, as well as the best of men; and his mother was altogether too energetic and hard-working to find any time to be gloomy. But Tip was misanthropic. His food never suited him, nor his apparel; and above all his other clothing, he had a fur cap, that filled him with the most morbid and unhealthy emotions. The wearing of this cap was a constant source of disagreement between him and his mother. He would, in hopes of its annihilation, leave it exposed to all sorts of dangers, from which his mother would always appear to rescue it. He would misuse it when out of her sight, but not fatally, owing to filial apprehensions. But it seemed gifted with perpetual youth, or rather perpetual middle-age, for it had passed its first bloom when it fell to him from a richer relative with a larger head.

His mother had contracted it in some way, so it fitted him tolerably well, if he would wear it properly. But though his mother was triumphant in making him wear it, in one thing he was firm to the last; let her put it on ever so good, he would never let it remain as she placed it; but he would take it off and drag it firmly and defiantly on to the backside of his head, so it would cover the most of his neck at the back, and in front leave about an inch of his pure white hair out in sight, like the frill of an old woman's cap.

Aspire Dingman, the hired man, was tall, and exceedingly loose-jointed, and he bent slightly forward in walking. His hair and complexion were what is called sandy, and his large, watery-looking blue eyes stood out from his face as if in search of something they could not find.

He was always dressed in a suit of light-brown tweed, and I should judge that he had grown rapidly, for his pantaloons were too short for him, even his best ones, which he only wore Sundays, and which were a large plaid, blue and green. His big leather

ASPIRE DINGMAN

shoes were separated even from these by a wide stripe of blue stocking, like two desert islands divided from the mainland by a strip of the deep blue sea. And his large red hands were so far from the bottom of his coat-sleeves that they looked lonely, and utterly hopeless of ever getting into any situation where they could enjoy repose. He was exceedingly faithful in his work, but I had been there three weeks before I discovered that he was a poet. Several times during that period, I heard Mrs. Cook speak in tones of withering contempt of "littery people," and she said it so directly at Aspire, that I could not help being aware that she meant him. But I thought, perhaps, that he whittled too much on the floor, or left things about, and by that she meant "littery."

But one morning, during the third week of my stay there, Mrs. Cook remarked at the breakfast table that, "if there is any class of people I can't bear, it is littery folks!"

She said this with a glance of such unutterable contempt at Aspire, (who always sat at the table with the family,) that it made his mouth open, and his eyes stand out further than ever with terror and deprecation.

I went to my room after breakfast and was writing a letter to Cecil, when Tip appeared at the door with his gloomy brow lit with a gleam of exultation, as he asked me, in mysterious tones, to "come down stairs a minute."

He seemed so urgent about it, that I put away my pen at once, and followed him down into the sitting-room, and out on to the piazza. There had been a heavy fall of rain during the night, and Tip pointed silently to a small dark object, lying soaked and battered on the grass. It was the cap.

"I guess it is done for now!" he cried exultingly. But at this unlucky moment his mother appeared, and taking Tip and the cap into the kitchen, she subjected them both to a warming and purify-

ing process, which, whatever it did to Tip, made the cap look better and more durable than ever.

I had just turned to go in myself, when Aspire Dingman appeared suddenly at my side, and asked me: —

"Do you think there is any harm in folk's writin' poetry for their own devotion?"

I thought he meant psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; but he added, immediately, looking over his shoulder, in the direction of the kitchen, from which he could hear Mrs. Cook's voice as she corrected Tip, and also Tip's wails: —

"She is awful sot aginst writin' poetry; but I don't see what hurt there is in it, if you don't print any of it; but do it jist for your own devotion."

I told him I could see no possible harm in any one's diverting themselves in any innocent manner. He looked so depressed and unhappy, that I could not help giving him this slight consolation. And, as I said it, his face lighted up with satisfaction, and from that hour he commenced giving me, in the most secret and mysterious manner, little slips of paper covered with what he called poetry. They were usually written on square pieces of paper, bordered round the edge with a running vine, made by pen with great labor, in imitation I suppose of funeral odes, which I have seen printed at the expense of surviving relatives, and at their pecuniary disadvantage.

There was one — "Owed to Shakespeare," so long, that you might imagine that he had had a long account running with the noble tragedian, and had come out largely in his debt. Then there were "Oweds to Spring, to Summer, to Hope, Memory, Liberty," and other single females, supposed to be free to receive the addresses of manly poets. As he delivered them to me he would shut the door, and stand with his back against it, and with a look upon his face as if Mrs. Cook were liable to become, at any moment, an incorporeal substance and come

into our presence through the keyhole. And accompanying each poem was a request, either verbal or written, "To burn it in the candle as soon as read."

I had often read of the sufferings poets have endured from an unsympathizing world; but I can truly say, that the sufferings of Aspire and the unappreciation of Mrs. Cook exceeded anything I had supposed possible. And I must have shown my pity in my counte-

THE MANUSCRIPTS.

nance, for he seemed deeply affected by it; and I thought then, and I think still, that it was only gratitude that caused that stricken young man to think of me more highly than I deserved or desired; for one evening (I had been there then about six weeks), as he handed me an "Owed to Saffo," with a secrecy he could not have exceeded had it been a deadly poison designed for the destruction of Mrs. Cook, he said to me, with a face that shamed his woolen shirt, and that was a warm crimson color:

"Polly Ann Hawkins haint nowhere."

I might have thought that this unfortunate girl had been suddenly annihilated had he not immediately added:

"Before you came I thought she was pretty neat; but, by vum, she can't hold a candle to you."

One pleasant day in July I gave my pupils a half-holiday, which they much desired and had earned by their diligence and good behavior. And I left the school-room at noon amid acclamations of joy and loyalty many a monarch might envy.

POLLY ANN HAWKINS.

After dinner Mrs. Cook asked me if I didn't want to walk down into the wood pasture with her; she was going there to pick some berries. She said they were all going, — Mr. Cook, Tip, and Aspire, and she thought I would be lonesome at the house alone. I told her I should be very glad to go.

The wood-pasture was more than a mile away, and the way to it was full of summer delights. The berry lot was on the edge of the wood-land; and, arrived there, I found so many beauties of ferns and mosses, and I loitered so dreamily over them, that, when Mrs. Cook appeared before me with her large pail full, I had not gotten my little two-quart dinner-pail a quarter-full. And as I looked at her brimming five-quart pail and her honest face dripping with perspiration, the noble ambition seized me on the spot to fill my little pail, or perish in the attempt.

So I told Mrs. Cook, who seemed anxious to go to the house, as it was nearly supper-time, that they might all leave me, and after I filled my pail I would follow them. But after they all went away, the coolness and stillness was so delightful, and the golden sunlight glinting through the tree-tops was so delicious, that I sat down on a fallen tree for a while to enjoy it; but the approaching sunset warned me that if I mastered my ambition, I must be alert.

I COME A PURPOSE.

I found a clump of bushes bending down with the luscious fruit, and had gotten my pail nearly full, and was reaching up for the cluster of larger ones, that I thought would look so well on the top as I carried it in, when I was startled by a voice close by my side.

"Miss Nora, I have come a purpose."

I turned, almost spilling my berries in my fright.

"Aspire Dingman! how you frightened me! What ever brought you down here again?"

He was arrayed in his very best clothes, the blue and green pantaloons, the tweed coat, the flaming red neck-tie. The haste to get through with his chores, and return in time, which seemed to me an incredible feat, or some emotion that was struggling in his breast, ren-

dered his face of a scarlet hue, while his eyes had a sort of a wild look; and never did his hands seem so homeless, look so much like two red wanderers who would never be at rest, as they did when he said again, in answer to my question:

"I come a purpose."

He seemed to have a difficulty in getting any further, and I said:

"Come for what purpose?"

"I have come clear down here, Miss Nora, a purpose—"

Again his courage, or his breath, failed him; and again I inquired, encouragingly:

"On purpose for what?"

"A purpose to walk up to the house with you."

I diligently suppressed any outward manifestation of annoyance, and answered pleasantly:

"It was entirely unnecessary for you to take so much trouble. I should not have been at all afraid, although I suppose you thought I would. I think I wont wait to finish filling my pail, it is so nearly full; but we will return to the house at once."

Then picking up my hat and the pail, I was just starting for the house when Aspire exclaimed:

"*Wont* you, Miss Nora, a goin' up to the house, lock arms with me?"

"Don't let me hear any more such absurd nonsense, Aspire," said I, with all the dignity I could command.

"Wont you lock arms with me part of the way?" he entreated.

I was about opening my lips to rebuke him into something like common sense, if possible, when a glance at his woe-begone, despairing countenance softened my tone.

"You go on ahead, if you please; you know the way so much better than I do; and I will follow. I know you can find out a better path than I can."

He started immediately; but every few steps he would look back over his shoulder at me, with a glance indescribable in its mingling of longing, agony, and suspense. Finally, he stopped short, and turned round and faced me.

"*Wont you* lock arms with me agoin' through the stunny pasture? It is awful hard goin' there over the stuns. Say, *wont you* lock arms with me there?"

"Mr. Dingman!" I commenced, in dignified tones—

"Wont you lock arms with me a rod or so?"

"Aspire Dingman, if you don't go on and lead the way, I shall certainly go on first myself, and if you don't want to seriously displease me, you will cease talking so absurdly."

He evidently discerned that I was in earnest, and he strode silently on, his long, lanky figure bending slightly forward; but, ever and anon, during our entire walk, he would look over his shoulder at me, with a longing, unsatisfied look in his blue, watery eyes, as if, although he suppressed any active outward tokens of it, the desire was still rampant in his heart to "lock arms" with me.

As we reached the door, he hastily thrust a paper in my hand, and disappeared, like a gaily-attired phantom, in the direction of the barn. I opened the paper as I stood there on the piazza. It was an "Owed to Miss Nora," and the fourteen verses following were worthy companions of the first, in merit and sentiment.

"I cannot tell thee what I knew.
To me such beauty lies
In your dark hair, I call it a auburn hair
Your forward, and your eyes.
And when you raise them last-named on me
I feel perfectly lost and dull,
The admiration I feel for thee
Is so completely inexpressible."

Below was a request that I would "burn them in a candle."

I complied with the spirit of the request by putting them in the stove. On the occasion of Aspire's handing me his next poem which was addressed to "Miss Nora," and exceeded the former in sentiment, I considered it to be my duty to talk to him kindly, but firmly.

He disappeared so suddenly, like a tweed phantom, while I was yet speaking to him, that I could not tell how he was affected; but as I still held it in my hand, he appeared again at my side, and asked me, in an agitated tone: —

A FRIENDLY ACT.

"Won't you burn it in a candle?" adding in a despondent way, "as a *friend?*" "Will you burn it as a *friend?*"

And from this time, he always added this to his requests. And once on a cool day, he brought some wood into the room where I was sewing, and asked me if he should build a fire for me as a "friend?"

On my return from school one day about the middle of the term, Mrs. Cook invited me to go with her and her husband to Randolph that evening, to attend a temperance lecture. I accepted it very willingly. It was early when we arrived at the lecture-room, and I told Mrs. Cook that I would just step into the post-office. And with many admonitions to "come right back," Mr. and Mrs. Cook entered.

I certainly intended to go right back, but I found a letter from Cecil, and what was the temperance lecture, what was all the world to me? As I read the warm words that came so directly from his heart to my own, I read in them only a gay young spirit, that was finding the great world a delightful place; but I did not read anything that told me that that delightful world was a dangerous one, for one of his generous, impulsive temperament. He spoke of his uncle Reginald as a "cool old fellow, who thinks himself one of the greatest of men, and who means to enjoy the world while he lives in it, and thinks his example is the only living one worth following."

I never thought that what to one of uncle's cool temperament, might be indulged in with comparative safety, might be fatal to one like Cecil. I laughed over his letter, and cried over it, for at the last he wrote: —

"I am working, working with all my strength, Nora. Of course I go into society a good deal, for Boston is a gay place, and uncle insists upon my doing like other young fellows of my age and station, for my being his nephew is in his eyes a greater merit than the cross of the legion of Honor. And if I refuse to go where he tells me, and do as they do when we meet, it seems to be a sort of a reproach to the life he leads, which I must confess, is rather of a gay one. And so that makes it impossible, dear, for me to do exactly as we talked about. I told uncle what you said. Your wanting me to study evenings as much as I could, and about shunning the first approach of temptation, and above all things, to shun wine-parties.

"You ought to have heard him laugh. Said he, 'I rather think there is no danger in your going where I take you. I declare, if such a thing were possible, I should almost think that Nora was reflecting somewhat on *my* life.' He thinks when he goes West, the East tips up. But he is the coolest and steadiest old fellow going, belongs to the church, and if he should drink a gallon of wine, it would only make him walk straighter, and talk more impressively about '*my* position,' and '*my* nephew.' Of course I have got to do as he says, and go where he takes me, although at first I didn't care for such gay doings at all, only he made me go, and now how much rather I would spend a quiet evening with you. But I am working, Nora, working with all my might, and it is all for you. I am determined to make a position in the world, to work myself up to a fortune, and a home for you, my darling sister — a home so bright and happy, that it shall atone for the dreary past."

When I entered the lecture-room it was crowded. The speaker had the compliment of every seat being full so early. I leaned up against a pillar near the door, and was resigning myself to a rather wearisome evening, in company with nearly a hundred fellow-sufferers, who were standing about me, occupying nearly every available inch of standing-room, when a good-looking young man carrying a child, with a woman following closely in his wake, came pushing through the crowd toward the door.

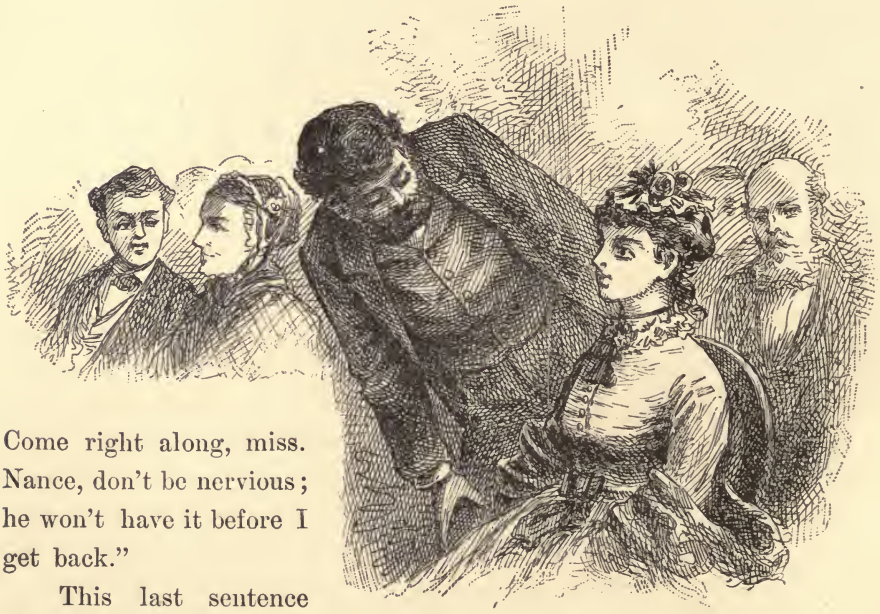
As they passed me, he looked down into my face, and something in it seemed to awaken his generosity and nobler feelings, for he asked me in a hearty, honest voice, that I knew came from a good heart: —

"Don't you want a seat?"

I told him I should certainly like one, but it seemed impossible for me to have one.

"Here, Nance, you take the little feller; you shall have our seat.

You see, miss, we was afraid that the baby was agoin' to have one, that is all that made us leave; we hated to, for the lecture is goin' to be a peeler! There hain't a smarter feller in the country than Dr. Chester, nor a better one. He lives in Boston, and you see he come here to visit his uncle, Judge Haviland, and the town invited him to lecture. He is as rich as a Jew. He lectures jest to do good; and that is all he doctors for, too; he no need to lift his finger.



GIVING UP HIS SEAT.

Come right along, miss. Nance, don't be nervious; he won't have it before I get back."

This last sentence was said over his shoulder to his wife, after we started up the aisle. He placed me in an excellent seat, directly beneath the speaker's stand. I thanked him for his courtesy, as I took my seat, to which he leaned down, and replied, in a hoarse whisper:

"I'd rather do it than not. Such a sweet, pretty face, to be a standin' up all night; I couldn't bear to see it. You see we wouldn't

have missed it for nothin' in the world, only we was so afraid the little feller would have it, right here in meetin'."

How it terminated I never knew—whether the "little feller" had one or not, nor what the mysterious thing was that was depending over the child's head. I thought, however, it was a fit.

As the kind man lifted his broad, rosy honest face from before me, another face met my eyes, and, as the clear eyes looked full into my own, for a moment, as I lifted them, I thought then, and I think still, that I never saw a better face. It was not its beauty, although it possessed that; but it was something better than beauty, the Chevalier Bayard expression, "without fear, without reproach." It was an intellectual face in the highest degree, and yet it was a face that a child would trust instinctively.

His lecture was something different from what I had ever heard. It was not the squalid, reeling drunkard that the speaker most condemned; it was the moderate drinker, the man who, with a cooler temperament and more natural self-control, can drink with less peril to himself, and so, by his own example of respectable vice, leads so many of excitable, intense temperaments down to ruin. He said one of these respectable drinkers was a greater curse to a community than a thousand hopeless sots; for they, in their degradation, were a more terrible warning to youth than the most eloquent sermon could be; and this respectable moderate drinker was the most insidious temptation to the young that Satan could possibly throw in their way.

But, toward the close of the lecture, he gave a picture of a drunkard's death, and the heritage he left his innocent children—the legacy of undeserved shame.

So held and enchained was I by the eloquence and pathos of the speaker, that I did not realize that tears were flowing down my face till I met the deep, compassionate eyes, bent full and pityingly upon me. Then, in sudden recollection and shame, I bent my head down upon the

seat in front of me, and sobbed like the baby that I was. But so many memories came to me—my father's grave, the mockery of the village children, Cecil's distress, our gloomy home.

When I raised my face again, attracted by the strange magnetism of a glance, it was only to meet the earnest penetrating gaze of the lecturer, as he took his seat, for the lecture was finished.

The temperance lecture was the engrossing topic of conversation for weeks. The handsome face, the eloquence, the pathetic power of the speaker was the one subject of interest. Mrs. Cook said, "It did beat all" how indifferent I was about it; but Mrs. Cook was mistaken. I did not forget it, nor him.

Finally time, that waits for no one, brought the last day of my school; and though my life at Randolph had not been altogether pleasant, still I looked forward with dread to the time when I should leave for home—for home; and it seems dreadful to speak so about home; but it seemed more dreary and dreadful still.

It was a very pleasant morning, and Aspire, who had been to the post-office early in the morning, had brought me a letter. It was from Cecil; and I seized it, and ran away to my own room to read it. It was filled, as usual, with his warm, loving words; and then followed the mention of a name, that made my cheeks turn rosy red, even in the unbroken seclusion of my chamber.

He had found a new friend, a Dr. Chester. That is, he had known him ever since he had been in Boston; but at first the doctor had seemed not over cordial to his uncle or him. But his uncle had always treated the doctor with great respect, for he was one of the richest men in Boston, as well as one of the best, the most useful.

"But, of late," wrote Cecil, "in fact, to be exact, ever since his visit to Randolph, Dr. Chester has shown me so many kindnesses and courtesies, that I cannot think they are for my own sake, but for the sake of my hidden princess, my fair Lady Nora. He told me that

he saw you there. And I shall not run the risk of spoiling you by telling you what he said about you, or what *I* said to him about you.

"He has been so very good to me that I thought I ought to add to his happiness in some way; and so yesterday, when we were speaking about you—for whenever we are alone he invariably brings the conversation around to you—I told him that my uncle was going to invite you to Boston for the winter. And you will come, wont you, darling? You will break my heart if you refuse.

"But, as I was saying, when I told Dr. Chester that you would probably spend the winter in Boston, a look of such glorified content swept over his face, that it was absolutely radiant.

"But, joking aside, I am counting the days until winter; for then I shall see you. If you cannot come here, I shall go where you are. But I think if you were here all the winter it would be so much better every way; for then I should stay at home evenings with you, or go out with you, and not go to all these gay parties, that are very fascinating, but I know are not the best thing for me."

The letter was very long, as all his letters were, and, like them all, a delight to my soul. And, above all the letters he had ever written to me, this one filled me with a strange unreasoning bliss, the cause of which I did not try to explain to myself.

But, as I went down stairs, ready for school, Mrs. Cook observed that, she guessed I was glad it was my last day, for she hadn't seen me look so bright since I had been there.

As we drew near the school-house, Tip, who was in his most dejected mood, took hold of my arm, and shook it slightly, complaining that he couldn't get my attention. Said he:

"I have asked you a question more'n twenty times, and you haint never answered me, nor nothin'. I never seen you act so kinder curious."

I am afraid I blushed, even before little Tip. I know I hastened to

give him due attention, and asked him at once to repeat his question.

"Wall," said he, "do you think I shall out-live mother?"

I said something about the uncertainty of life.

"Wall, sposen I live to be eighty, or so?"

I told him his mother couldn't be expected to live to see him eighty.

As I said this, he set his cap firmly on to the back of his head, and said, in a satisfied tone:

"There is one thing certain, I shall have to have a new hat then, for there can't be a mourning weed fixed on to this cap, no how."

Tip went home for his dinner, and did not appear in the afternoon. And when I went home at night I found Mrs. Cook in a state of deep anxiety. Tip had not been seen since noon, and his mother, with a weakness I would have believed impossible to her sensible nature, was treasuring up, to her grief, words Tip had uttered on his return home.

Some boy had reviled the hated cap more than common, and life was a burden, he said. He shouldn't stand it so long, and she'd find out that he wouldn't, and she'd be sorry, when it was too late, that she made him wear it.

There were tears in Mrs. Cook's eyes, as she related these melancholy remarks. And when Aspire came in to supper, and said he saw Tip, early in the afternoon, going toward the creek, her agony was intense. Mr. Cook made the sensible and practical suggestion that "he has gone a fishing."

"No! Something had happened to William Henry. She felt it in her bones."

The fact of her calling him William Henry impressed me, too, with a sense of his danger; for it was the first time I had ever heard him called by that name.

Aspire, always fidelity and goodness personified, took his hat silently from the nail, and started in the direction of the creek. In a few minutes he was seen coming through the orchard with Tip in his arms. We all rushed out into the porch to greet them. Mr. Cook was right. Tip's feelings had been too outraged by the school-boys to permit of his meeting them in the afternoon; so he had been a fishing.

TIP'S MISFORTUNE.

But just as Aspire reached the stream, a treacherous log gave way, and the boy fell into the water. No worse consequences would have befallen him, probably, had he been alone, than a fright; but Mrs. Cook looked upon him as one rescued from the jaws of death. And as she grasped Aspire by the hand, which she thought had saved her boy from death, and which she knew had written such an amount of poetry under disadvantageous circumstances, she said:

"There needn't anybody tell me that littery folks haint good for nothing."

And while Aspire stood before her like a statue of bashful innocence, in damp tweed, she looked about her with an air, as if she had always been convinced of the fact herself, but had now got incontrovertible evidence to prove it in the eyes of a gainsaying world.

"I'd like to have anybody tell me now that littery folks haint good as anybody. I'd like to see anybody, while you are in my house, hinder you from bein' littery."

I was truly glad to know that Aspire's lot was to be pleasanter in the future than it had been in the past. And as he had returned to his devotion to Polly Ann Hawkins, which was warmly returned, life seemed to stretch before him in a pleasant valley. His Parnassus, at first so precipitous and rocky, had dwindled to a flowery hillock that he could climb with ease.

I knew he had returned to his first love from an "Owed" he had handed me that morning. It was a very long "Owed"; but one verse of it will give a good idea of the twenty-four remaining ones. It was entitled "A Parting Owed," and commenced as follows:

I wish thee much joy, oh Miss Nora,
Although I feel awful cast down and sore,
To think of what couldn't never be,
Beautifulest of wimming, which is thee!
But if such thing can ere be did,
I'll keep all former affections and admirations hid,
And like a iron anchor stand
By she whose name is Polly Ann.
And now, most loveliest mortal dame,
With mournful joy I sign my name,
Till I expire,

Your friend ASPIRE

(DINGMAN.)

In a short time Tip sat before the fire, swathed in blankets, looking like a small mummy who had died in despair. But once his face lighted up with joy and triumph. It was when Aspire, in relating for the third time, at the request of the mother, his simple story of the rescue, mentioned, incidentally, that, as he lifted Tip from the water, the cap fell off and went down stream, and was lost.

I was to start for home the next day, and as there was a small rent in the skirt of my grey traveling dress, I took it out into the pleasant western porch to mend it. And, as I sat there sewing, I pictured my return. I knew so well that my step-mother would discover that small mended place the first thing; and how plainly I could hear her say:

"Wall, Nora, you have hetcheled out that dress pretty quick; and your shoes, too, if there haint a crack in one of them. They ought to have lasted you two years.."

And then Mrs. Dagget would groan:

"I shan't be here long to see it go on."

And then, in honor of my return, for I believe they were both attached to me, in their way, I thought, perhaps, Mrs. Dagget would strike into the funeral anthem which she always sung in her happier moments. The tune was wailing and despairing in the highest degree; and in her quavering and mournful tones the effect was depressing and melancholy beyond words to describe.

My friends, I am going
A long and tedious journey,
Never to return,
Never, never, never to return.

As I pictured all this, how low my heart sank; and yet it was no ill-usage that I dreaded; it was a total lack of sunshine, the heart-food, lacking which, the soul hungers. I wondered if home would be to me in the future as dreary as the past had been. No! no! Cecil, my darling! I should have a home sometime, a bright, blessed, beautiful

home. I didn't care whether its walls were of brown-stone or unpainted wood, so that it held peace and tenderness. Of course, I should not always be first in his heart, as I was now. There would be some gentle, lovely woman to share our home. I wanted it to be so. Earth's crowning blessing my darling must possess, if I looked out for it myself. And I would love her so dearly, because she was so dear to him. I would love her so she couldn't help but love me a little back; and, like the fairy stories, we would live together happily ever afterward.

Perhaps I saw another face in the dreamy picture of my future. But, if so, I thought it was certainly not strange that I should remember one who had been so good to Cecil.

It was always shadowy and quiet on that western porch, but it was more quiet on this evening, it seemed to me, than I had ever known it to be. I can remember just how the sky looked when I first went out, a mass of rose, and purple, and amethyst, changing to a pale golden yellow. But I sat there till it turned a dull, lifeless grey, and then a star shone out above it.

It was then that a carriage with one man in it passed by, and I thought I heard it stop. But I thought, if I thought anything about it, that it was some one to see Mr. Cook upon business. I did not hear a step behind me, and the first intimation I had of any one's presence, was a friendly hand laid upon my shoulder: —

"You poor, dear child."

Mrs. Cook's face was wet with tears, and she bent down and kissed me.

"What is it?" I cried; "Cecil? is anything the matter with Cecil?" It was so natural for the first thought of my heart to rise to my lips.

"You poor little dear!" This was from Mr. Cook, who was followed by an elderly man, whom I recollected as the innkeeper at

Randolph. This man came forward and said, "This is the young lady, I suppose?"

And I remember well, how piteously he looked at me, as he handed me a telegram. I took it and read:—

BAD NEWS.

"Cecil Vail mortally wounded. Send Miss Nora Vail instantly."

From the time I read these words till I stood in the room with Cecil, it all seems like a dream, or rather as if all the world of living, breathing, happy beings, moving by their own volition and impulses,

"Cecil, my darling, my brother!" And I, Nora Vail, whose whole worth of life was here slipping from me so fast, knelt by him, with my arms about his neck, and my face pressed close to his own. At last he whispered, in a tone of self-reproach I couldn't understand: —

"I have broken your heart, poor Nora; how white you are."

THE MEETING.

And he raised his poor, weak hand, that lay upon the counterpane, and tried to pass it caressingly over my face; but it fell helplessly again to his side; and with his eyes full of sorrow and deep self-reproach, the faint voice went on: —

"Did they tell you, Nora?"

"What, Cecil?"

"Did they tell you how it was done?"

"No, they told me nothing!"

"They will tell you," he whispered, in short sentences, broken often with weakness. "You will have to know it; I want to tell you

THE AFFRAY.

now, while I can hear you say you forgive me; it was in a drunken quarrel. Carlton insulted me, we had both been drinking, I struck him, and he stabbed me."

He paused a minute, and then looked up into my face, with those affectionate, appealing eyes, that never appealed to me, or never could, in vain.

"Can you forgive me? I have broken my promise to you, but I

was tempted, Nora; you can never know how they tempted me, uncle and all, and I was weak; I have fallen so low — I am too guilty."

"You are not so guilty, my poor darling, as those who have led you, driven you into temptation. The guilt will be upon them. My broken heart, whose only treasure you were, will witness against them at the Last Day. Oh! why did I ever let you go from me?" I cried in my anguish.

The doctor touched me upon my shoulder. I remember well how tenderly and pityingly the kind eyes I had not forgotten, looked down upon me, as I rose and sat down by the pillow. He said "I need not disturb you but a minute."

He bent down and moistened Cecil's lips with wine, for he lay again, as he did when I first came, white and motionless as the dead. The doctor did not caution me about exciting him, but only said, "he will revive again," and drew up a chair in front of the bed. We both waited; it may have been a quarter of an hour that he lay thus, while the gray dawn struggled with the pale night-lamp for victory, and a shadow out of the dark passes of the valley would flit across his face, coming oftener and oftener; and the doctor's watch, ticking loudly in the silence, sounded like the pulse of eternity throbbing on forever. At last Cecil opened his eyes, and seemed to be thinking of something that troubled him; for he knit his brow, as if in deep thought; finally he spoke in a whisper: —

"Won't you tell me; there is something I wanted to say?"

And he lifted to the doctor's face his great eyes, so full of the mystery of the future he was so near, and full of a perplexed, questioning expression.

The doctor bent over him, and laid his hand gently upon his forehead, and smoothed back the brown hair as tenderly as a mother might.

"Was it something about your sister?"

"Yes, Nora;" and his eyes lost that seeking look, and became full of a boundless sorrow and regret.

"Yes, Nora; she loves me so."

The doctor moved away, and went and stood by the window, looking out, and I went forward and knelt again by his side.

"Nora, lay your cheek down close to mine. I can't die till you promise me something—"

"I will promise you anything; there is nothing too hard for me to promise you."

"Will you try to forget me; let it be to you as if I had died when I was a baby."

"Don't think of me, darling brother; think of—"

But he interrupted me with his faint whisper, full of a boundless sorrow and regret.

"I said I would make your future happy, and I have broken your heart. I wanted to make you a happy home, that would atone—" Here the faint voice died out.

"God will care for me, Cecil. Don't think of me, darling; think of the Good Father, who can forgive all our sins, and take us to the dear home above, where there is no sin nor sorrow—where we can meet again. Will you pray for this, Cecil?" I whispered, with my cheek close to his, which was growing cold so fast.

"Lead us not into temptation," he murmured, striving to clasp his hands together, as he used to in prayer when a child. "I should have prayed that; let them all—those like me, as I was when I left you, young, unused to the world—let them pray that prayer. Had I then, I shouldn't have been here, so low, beyond God's forgiveness—God's mercy."

"That you can never be. He loves you, and pities you more than you can ever dream of. He wants to forgive you, to take you to His own rest, if you will ask Him, if you will trust Him."

But he only murmured again, with his faint voice, the words that seemed to him to be of most comfort, "Lead us not into temptation." And then he added, while a sudden look of anguish, and despair, and reproach came into his face: —

"Tell uncle —"

But whatever message the soul, groping upon the borders of the unknown, where things strange to us here, will be explained, whatever word he wished to leave for him who had been the cause of his undoing, will never be known here; for the dying lips refused to utter what we could gather only in the knit brow of despair and the troubled and reproachful eyes; the voice sank away into silence, and the message commenced on earth will be finished at the bar of God.

He lay silent, with closed eyes, for so long a time that I thought he would never be conscious again. But as I bent over him, thinking, as fond hearts will, that I could give him up if he could only look at me, or speak to me once more, he suddenly opened his eyes, and looked up into my face with the old innocent baby-look that he used to wear, with the anguish, and reproach, and fear all gone now. And I fancied he thought he was again in the old chamber at home, for he said with a smile, as he used to before I left him at night: —

"Kiss me, Nora."

I bent down and kissed his brow, and cheek, and lips. Then softly, but quite loud and clear, he said: —

"Good-night, Nora."

Then he murmured dreamily some words of the old prayer he used to repeat to me: —

"Now I lay me down to sleep," and, turning his head over gently, he went to sleep.

* * * * * * * *

From the moment of Cecil's death, there is a blank, a death in life, that lasted for long weeks, though there were intervals of par-

tial consciousness that seem like fragments of frightful dreams faintly remembered, when I would be vainly striving to save Cecil from some danger; it was Cecil, always Cecil, who was in some peril from which I was striving to rescue him.

Sometimes he would be falling over a precipice, steep and sandy, clinging to a slender twig that grew upon its very utmost edge; and as I reached down to him it would break, and he would fall down, down, down; and the sand would slide out underneath me, and I would fall with him and be lost. And days of unconsciousness would follow.

Sometimes he and I would be walking over endless tracts of ice, glittering on every side of us, and no object in sight only us two, when suddenly the ice would break beneath our feet, and he would disappear, and I would plunge in after him, and die with him.

Sometimes the solid ground would give way beneath our feet. We would stand upon the crust of volcanoes, that would burst forth in flames and swallow us up, first Cecil, and then me, who would rush in after him. Islands would sink with us beneath the water, and I would go down with my arms stretched out toward him, striving to reach him, to save him, as he sank just before me.

We would be out at sea in two boats, side by side, with nothing else visible on the wide waste of waters. For days we would sail along in that dead calm, with the sun beating down upon our heads, striving to flee from some danger that was menacing Cecil, to get to some land of escape that was far away, hidden from us. At last we would see land ahead, safety for Cecil, when, just before we reached it, his boat would begin to sink, sink, sink, and I, plunging over the side of the boat, would sink with him.

At last, my intervals of consciousness became more frequent and my dreams calmer, as my fever burnt itself out and died away; and at last, one night, which must have been about six weeks from the day I went to my uncle's, I awoke and heard a clock strike twelve.

The room was dimly lighted, but still I could see that it was entirely strange to me. A woman sat by a stand, with her back to me, and a face was bending over me; and, although it seemed looking on me from some strange distance, well I knew that kind, noble, gentle face, pale and weary now, as from long watching.

For the instant, that face brought it all back to me. I had been sent for. Cecil was sick. Why was I lying there, when he needed me and, may be, wanted me? I would speak, at least, and, collecting all my strength, I spoke out, in a voice I did not know, it was so low, and weak, and strange to me.

"How is he?"

The face bent forward eagerly as I spoke; and while it remained there, wrapped in a kind of haze, that made it seem far away, though it was so near I could have touched it with my hand, I repeated my words again, as people do in dreams:

"How is Cecil?"

The face bent down and kissed me, as a being from another world might. The brown hair swept about my face like a soft mist, and, for a moment, I was standing out in a spring sunset, flowers were lying upon my brow, bending from leafy boughs overhead; a warm rain was falling upon my face.

"He is asleep."

The words carried me back again into the chamber. The voice sounded as dreamy and strange as if it came from the land of dreams, and yet it contented me. I remember thinking dreamily how good it seemed to be at ease about him — he was better — and to go to sleep.

And then we were out in a boat on a pleasant river, Cecil and I, gliding along between green shores, where birds were singing, with the cool waves splashing against the side of the boat. Fainter and fainter sounded the ripples; the bird's song melted into the soft sighing of the water, into silence — the silence of a sleep that was as profound, almost,

as the sleep of death, and which lasted through the rest of that night and the next day, until noon, when I awoke, rational and out of danger.

They were very kind to me, uncle, his housekeeper, and all, and uncle urged me to stay with him always. But no! I could not stay in the place that had proven so hard for him, my darling.

And not one penny of the wealth he wished to bestow upon me for Cecil's sake, could I take; it seemed to me like the price of his blood. No! I must work, I said, or die. I only waited there till I should get stronger.

NORA VAIL CHESTER.

But what I suffered in those long days and nights only the dear Lord can tell, who draws so near when we are in sorrow.

How I suffered in those long days of convalescence, when I felt my strength was returning, that I was coming back out of the shadow of death, into a world where Cecil was not! Those long, long nights, when the air was full of his voice, his ringing laugh, his pet names for me, his dying words.

But they were all kind to me; and that face that bent over me with tears by my brother's bed, and that met my conscious gaze first of all, that face has, through all the years since, never changed to me.

We have a little girl, that her father would call Nora — Nora Vail Chester — her father would have it so. But my name is all she pos-

sesses of me, for she is her father's image in miniature; and I love her better, because she has his eyes, his smile, and his sunny hair.

We try to make home the pleasantest spot on earth to our little girl and boy, so that, in after years, amidst life's battle, they can have at least a sweet memory to comfort them. I am a happy and proud wife and mother—happy in my home; for the luxury with which my husband loves to surround me is nothing to the love that I find there—proud of my darlings, my noble husband, my pretty little ones. But Cecil, my baby—though, in his three-years manliness, he hardly likes to be called that—has the same large, dark, loving eyes that have looked upward to me thousands of times, as I smoothed back just such clustering curls from another white forehead.

He is generous, affectionate, impulsive, easily influenced. Sometimes he comes to me at twilight, tired of his play, and lays his head on my knee, and, looking up in my face with loving eyes, he says:

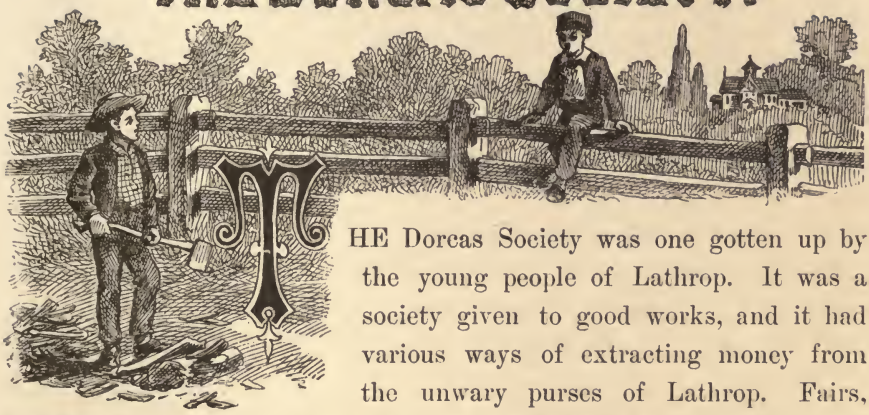
"What makes you cry, mamma?"

And for answer I only draw him closely to my heart, as if to hold him there against all the evil and temptation in the world, and cry:

"O Cecil, Cecil!"

HE WAITED TO SEE NO MORE.

THE DORCAS SOCIETY.



THE Dorcas Society was one gotten up by the young people of Lathrop. It was a society given to good works, and it had various ways of extracting money from the unwary purses of Lathrop. Fairs, grab-bags, bazars, post-offices, all these means had been exhausted, and rumor said that Mrs. Moulton, at whose house the weekly meeting was to be held next, was going to inaugurate something entirely new for their pleasure and profit. It was added that Mrs. Moulton had a young lady friend from the city, there on a visit, and it was supposed that she would aid in their entertainment.

The day before that momentous meeting, as the afternoon was gradually melting away in the golden sunset, little Rob Peters stood in the back yard of the Moulton cottage. A few sticks of kindling wood lay at his feet, as trophies of his prowess, and he leaned upon his axe-handle, as one wearied in the conflict. As he stood there, another small figure approached down the road, and walking past the open gate, climbed over the fence, and drew near.

The new-comer was the son of Prof. Muir's housekeeper, and

his name was Jim Wells. Prof. Paul Muir was talented, handsome, wealthy, thoroughly good, and the owner of Villa Eden, the handsomest and grandest residence for miles and miles around.

Mrs. Moulton was fair-faced, lovely in soul and life, comfortable as to the world's goods, and had been for one year a widow. If you asked little Rob Peters, leaning upon his battle-axe, what relation he sustained to the fair, young widow, he would doubtless say, with a deep sigh, that "he was bound to her." The sigh could be no deeper, if she were an ogre, and the figurative chains he spoke of were of iron, that clanked as he walked.

But Rob was of a morbid turn of mind, and was not happy. In fact, I don't know as he could be very happy, under any circumstances. Gloom, and morbid views of life, seemed to be his peculiar inheritance. He certainly had no other hereditary possessions, so perhaps he might be pardoned for making the most of what he had. He, in reality, loved his gentle little mistress, and the change from the town poorhouse, to her pleasant home and gentle guardianship, had been almost like a change from earth to heaven. He was one of Dora Moulton's pet charities, one of the many ways in which she spent her liberal income, as a steward of her great Master.

She could be no kinder to him, if he were her own brother. She clothed him handsomely, sent him to school, and looked forward to starting him in life in some honorable and useful manner. And slight indeed was the labor which he did in payment for these services.

But Rob was melancholy, and leaned upon his axe-handle, and looked out upon life, with gloomy and questioning eyes.

"Hello, Rob," said the new-comer.

"Hello, back again!" said Rob, but made no change of countenance or position.

But the new-comer was evidently in a talking mood, and was not to be discouraged.

"Seen you killin' hens, over here, this mornin', an' makin' a fuss. What's up?"

"Oh, the Dorcust Society is goin' to meet here, to-morrow night. I killed 'em for the Dorcusses."

Never, in the memory of man, did Rob call this society other than the Dorcust, and its members he invariably called Dorcusses.

Now, if Jim had one special weakness, it was a jealousy of those who possessed superior advantages, and a cankering fear lest they were putting on airs, and looking down upon him. And like older children, who are afflicted with this infirmity, he often imagined people were guilty of this crime towards him, who were entirely innocent of it.

So he now observed, with some bitterness: —

"I guess other folks can have things to their housen, and kill hens, and make fusses. My mother belongs to the Female Sufferin' Society, and is goin' to have the Female Sufferers to our house, bime-by."

But Rob seemed to take no sort of interest in the Female Suffrage Society. His gloomy chin rested gloomily on the axe-handle, and he looked at Jim, with gloomy eyes, as he said: —

"What's the use of Dorcusses, anyway?"

"I d'no," responded Jim, looking non-plussed.

Evidently Rob had no disposition to put on airs. So Jim softened, and mellowed down into sociability again, and a look of neighborly interest and concern covered his face, as Rob put the gloomy conundrum to him once more.

"What's the use of Dorcusses, anyway? Had to run of errants all day. Kep' me on my feet, all day a'most, killin' hens and things; and splittin' kindlin' wood; shouldn't have to split half so much if it wuzn't for them Dorcusses."

"Have to split for more'n two fires?" asked Jim, feelingly.

"Don't, when there haint nobody here. Miss Moulting has got a feller here now, a-seein' of her."

"No — has she? What kind of a lookin' feller?"

"He'd be a good-lookin' feller, if it wuzn't for his beerd."

"What's the matter with his beerd?"

"Oh, it is all over his chin, and hangs down over his mouth,

"THAT FELLER."

like a curting. I'll be hanged, if I didn't laugh when I see him kiss Miss Moulting. I'll be hanged, if he didn't have to hold back his beerd with one hand, while he kissed her. I snickered out loud, but they wus so took up with each other that they didn't ketch me at it. But I couldn't help snickerin'."

"Is she his bo, do you think?" said Jim.

"Yes, I 'most know she is. Sets there on the sofa, with his

arm round her now, I'll bet. She did, when I carried in the last load. I peeked through the door agin, and seen 'em. Talkin' awful sociable too."

"What about?"

"Oh, about love, and such-like." Rob included in that last happy term the wide world of sentiment and affection. "N' then I seen him git down on his knees before her, and take both her hands in his'n, and say, 'I love you — I love you to destruction.'"

"You don't say so!" Jim's eyes were round as large, blue glass beads.

"Jest es true es I live and breathe — hope to die this very minute."

Jim was convinced. They had no stronger oaths to bear witness to any fact, however extraordinary.

"What did she say?"

"Oh, she kinder crumpled down towards him, and says, 'I love you too, Charles, and will be your bride.'"

"What else?"

"Oh, lots and lots of jist such. Ocians of it."

"Shaw! she is his bo, haint she?"

"Must be. But I haint the first idee where he come from. First I knowed there he wus, right there in the parlor."

"Where wus that girl from Boston village, that is a-visitin' her?"

"Don't know — didn't see her. Mebby she's down to Squire Leland's a-visitin'; they was down there yesterday. Or mebby she's to bed with the sick headache, or suthin'."

"Hum — shaw! What else did they say?" Jim's curiosity was rampant, and could not easily be appeased.

"Oh, all of a sudden, he laughed out loud — the feller did — about how he and Miss Moulting would fool Professor Muir; he seemed to be awful tickled about it, the feller did."

But here Jim's anger rose suddenly and fiercely. No henchman, in feudal times, was ever more loyal to his liege lord, than was Jim to Professor Muir. And few were more deserving than Paul Muir of such devoted loyalty.

"I guess they'll fool him, a great sight. I guess they'll fool my professor. He knows more than the hull of the Dorcusses put together."

"Mebby he knows more'n the Female Sufferin' Society," says Rob, sarcastically.

"Wall, he duz. He knows more'n any Dorcust, or any Female Sufferer that ever walked on two feet. And I guess Miss Moulting will have to get up earlier than she does now, before she'll fool my Mr. Muir. He forgets more every night, a-goin' up stairs to bed, than she'll ever know."

But here Rob's anger swept over him in a fierce wave.

"If you've got anything to say aginst Miss Moulting, you'd better shet up, and shet up quick, too."

At this, Jim's hereditary predisposition got the better of him. "Oh, you think you are somebody, don't you," he cried, "'cause you've got a feller here, with a long beerd? I guess Mr. Muir has got as good-lookin' a beerd as any other feller. It is as good a lookin' one as I ever see, anyway. You seem to think there can't anybody else raise beerds, only jist that feller."

"I'll raise you, if you don't clear out, and clear out quick, too."

Jim saw determination darkening the gloomy orbs, and backed off, just as Margaret, the cook, came to the back porch, and called Robbie in to his supper.

Professor Paul Muir was sitting in his pleasant study, not engaged in reading, but in seeing visions and dreaming dreams. Not unpleasant ones, if one might judge from his face. It was an earnest, strong face, as well as a very handsome one. A face to trust, to reverence, as well as admire. As we said, he was not reading, though the

shelves, filled with rare volumes, might well tempt a student. No, he was sitting, holding a tiny, delicately-tinted glove in his hands, and looking at it, with intent, tender eyes. The little glove exhaled a faint odor of violet, as he turned it over to see more plainly the name, woven in dainty, violet silk on the wrist. "Dora," just that one word, yet it seemed, judging from his face, to hold a full volume of tender thoughts and memories.

PAUL'S ANTICIPATION.

But a knock rouses him from his happy musings, and quickly dropping the glove in a secret drawer, and, judging from the change in his countenance, his ecstatic dreams also, he shut the drawer with a sharp click, and said, "Come in."

The form that entered was tall, bony, angular, and the face was not

But here Jim's anger rose suddenly and fiercely. No henchman, in feudal times, was ever more loyal to his liege lord, than was Jim to Professor Muir. And few were more deserving than Paul Muir of such devoted loyalty.

"I guess they'll fool him, a great sight. I guess they'll fool my professor. He knows more than the hull of the Dorcusses put together."

"Mebby he knows more'n the Female Sufferin' Society," says Rob, sarcastically.

"Wall, he duz. He knows more'n any Dorcust, or any Female Sufferer that ever walked on two feet. And I guess Miss Moulting will have to get up earlier than she does now, before she'll fool my Mr. Muir. He forgets more every night, a-goin' up stairs to bed, than she'll ever know."

But here Rob's anger swept over him in a fierce wave.

"If you've got anything to say aginst Miss Moulting, you'd better shet up, and shet up quick, too."

At this, Jim's hereditary predisposition got the better of him. "Oh, you think you are somebody, don't you," he cried, "'cause you've got a feller here, with a long beerd? I guess Mr. Muir has got as good-lookin' a beerd as any other feller. It is as good a lookin' one as I ever see, anyway. You seem to think there can't anybody else raise beerds, only jist that feller."

"I'll raise you, if you don't clear out, and clear out quick, too."

Jim saw determination darkening the gloomy orbs, and backed off, just as Margaret, the cook, came to the back porch, and called Robbie in to his supper.

Professor Paul Muir was sitting in his pleasant study, not engaged in reading, but in seeing visions and dreaming dreams. Not unpleasant ones, if one might judge from his face. It was an earnest, strong face, as well as a very handsome one. A face to trust, to reverence, as well as admire. As we said, he was not reading, though the

shelves, filled with rare volumes, might well tempt a student. No, he was sitting, holding a tiny, delicately-tinted glove in his hands, and looking at it, with intent, tender eyes. The little glove exhaled a faint odor of violet, as he turned it over to see more plainly the name, woven in dainty, violet silk on the wrist. "Dora," just that one word, yet it seemed, judging from his face, to hold a full volume of tender thoughts and memories.

PAUL'S ANTICIPATION.

But a knock rouses him from his happy musings, and quickly dropping the glove in a secret drawer, and, judging from the change in his countenance, his ecstatic dreams also, he shut the drawer with a sharp click, and said, "Come in."

The form that entered was tall, bony, angular, and the face was not

beautiful. It was the face of his housekeeper, Mrs. Wells, or, in her own words, "Serena Wells, survivin' relict of the late James Wells, of Wellsville."

She is several years older than Prof. Muir, but she appreciates him fully. In fact, she has been for several years closely attached to him, and has manifested her partiality in many ways, some of which he was aware of, and some of which were of so secret and mysterious a nature, that no living person, except her bosom friend, Betsy Wood, was aware of them.

THE LETTER "M."

Three times a day did she solemnly turn out her tea, leaving the tea-grounds, and, with a countenance becoming the solemnity of the mystic rite, wave the cup three times around her head, from the direction of the rising sun, rap on it three times with her bony knuckles, and then look into its depths, hoping and expecting to see Prof. Muir's handsome face, photographed on the tea-grounds, dawning upon her as the sun dawns upon the waiting earth.

Occasionally she saw, or fancied she saw, the letter M, and then she was triumphant; for M, as she truly observed to Betsy, stood both

for Muir and for marriage. Though, as she always added, for she was conscientious, she made no brags and boasted over no opportunities. It was also a great comfort to her that Prof. Muir walked into her room, under a four-leafed clover, which she had found with great outlay of time and aching of back (for she was badly troubled with rheumatism), and had secretly placed for his overthrow over his study door. It was his daily sitting-room, and there was no other mode of entrance, only through the window. Yet she considered his passing beneath it an extremely favorable omen, and so also did Betsy Wood.

When her admiration of him manifested itself in the form of delicious puddings and crisp breakfast-rolls the professor was content. But when it overflowed in sentimental remarks and languishing glances, although a brave man, he fled before it.

She asked him now if he wanted anything special for his supper to-night; if he could think of anything he could relish more than the common run of "vittles" they was used to.

He answered her pleasantly, that he wished for nothing uncommon and special. And then she asked, with a tinge of anxiety in her voice:

"Are you a layin' out to go to the Dorcas Society to-morrow night?"

He said, "Yes, he might go if he returned from town in time. He had business of importance in town."

Mrs. Wells retired from the presence with a light buoyancy of spirit that extended itself to her tea-cakes. What would she say if she knew that "his business of importance" was only to get a bouquet, the rarest of flowers, for Dora Moulton?

"Sweet Dora! Darling Dora!" Thus did our grave professor call her, to himself, as he sat there in the gathering twilight.

Poor man! He had been cheated out of his happiness so long that he thought the paradise which was now opening before him would be all the sweeter for his long waiting.

All his life long he had loved Dora, worshiped her. He had been forced to stand by and see a man with not half his worth take his treasure from him, and, what was ten-fold harder to his true, tender heart, had seen that man hold it lightly, and grow tired of what he would have bartered half his life for.

He had seen the soft, dove-like eyes grow weary, and wistful, and large with pain and despair; seen them turn to his tried and true face, full of an innocent, child-like longing for the sympathy and tenderness he would have given the whole world to bestow.

But our grave professor was strong, as well as tender. And so, when he found himself in danger, he was strong enough to run away from temptation. Some people kneel down every morning and pray, "Lead me not into temptation," and then rise from their knees and deliberately walk into it. But Paul Muir was wiser and stronger; and when he saw, in Dora Moulton's eyes, the truth they were so unconsciously revealing—that her marriage had been a terrible mistake, that she had thrown away the jewel and accepted the counterfeit—he went away, for the simple reason that he dared not stay. He was not afraid of her husband ill-using her, unless by indifference and neglect; and so he placed long miles of land and sea between him and those wistful brown eyes. He took his sore heart to a distant city, and there tried to forget.

He had wealth enough, but more came to him, fame, success. But those best of friends, happiness and content, came not.

But he was calm and reticent concerning his inner life. He was pleasant and genial to all, and was called a very successful, and an exceptionally happy man. Thank heaven! there are some who can bear their burdens with a smiling face, and not weary the heavens and the souls of their friends with selfish murmurings. If his heart was a grave, as he indeed felt it to be, he covered it with fragrance and beauty, that cheered and blessed the lives of others.

Five years after his flight news came to him that George Moulton was dead—thrown from a horse and killed instantly. He waited six months, an eternity to him, and then he returned to the beautiful home he had never sold, because it was near hers, the home he had named, years ago, when they were boy and girl lovers, Villa Eden.

The first time he had looked in Dora Moulton's eyes he thought he saw in them a prophecy of future happiness, home, rest, blessedness.

He had said to himself that he would wait just one year, in memory of the man who had blasted two lives, before he spoke of love to her—just one year, not one moment longer; and to-morrow evening that long, long year of waiting would end. He had treated her, meantime, only as a friend; he had guarded his words, his actions. But the mystic language that soul speaks to soul had told him the sweet truth. She was shy as a wild bird, but he knew she loved him.

And to-morrow evening he could speak to her, after the tiresome company had all left. He would linger awhile alone with her, the darling, and tell her all he had longed so to say to her. He pictured to himself just how her sweet, brown eyes would glance up into his. Her eyes were always as clear and honest and innocent as a child's. And oh, the sweet, sweet story he would read in them!

He was thinking of just what he would say to her, of all the fond, loving, pet names he would call her, how he would take those soft little hands in his own, how he would draw the blushing, lovely little face to his bosom, to hold her there against all the world—against all care and sorrow, when, suddenly, little Jim Wells entered the room. Jim came with a lighted lamp, which he set down on the table with such a bang that it startled the professor. He looked up and said:

"Why, Jim, what's the matter?"

"I'm mad! madder'n a hen!" cried Jem, in a loud, angry voice. "I wish I'd licked him. I could lick him, I know I could, if it hadn't been jest as it was."

"How was it, Jim?" said the professor, with an amused smile. He had a keen eye for the humorous, and Jim looked so much like a very small bantam, whose feathers were bristling with indignation, that he could hardly avoid laughing outright.

"Well, I guess you wouldn't laugh if you knowed how it wus. The idee of Miss Moulting fooling you, her and that feller with the beerd, sayin' they wus a-goin' to fool you, and then snickerin' over it! It made me madder'n a hen — madder'n a wet hen," he added, as if that was the last height to which human indignation could ascend.

"What is that you are saying?" said the professor, suddenly losing all sense of the ludicrous, his face growing red and white in turn.

"Why, her Rob hern 'em say it this very day. Hern 'em talking about it, her and that feller with a beerd that is there a courtin' of her."

"What do you mean?" Jim had never heard the good-natured professor's voice sound as it did now.

"She did say it, jest as sure as I live and breathe; hope to die this very minute. Rob hern her say it, and she and the other feller snickered. Rob hern 'em."

"Tell me at once what you know," said the professor, sternly.

And Jim, nothing loth, began, and told the whole story, from beginning to end, just as Rob had told it to him. He omitted nothing. He began with their introductory conversation. "The Dorcusses, the Sufferin' Society, the kindling-wood, the feller with the beerd, how he told Mrs. Moulting he loved her, how she said she loved him, and would be his bride."

Not once did the professor interrupt him, by word or gesture, during his recital. But, by the time he had concluded his story, the red flush that had contended for the mastery on the professor's face had quite vanished, leaving an almost deathly pallor. Jim, though exceed-

ingly disagreeable, was truthful. As for Rob, he looked upon life with far too serious and gloomy a vision for romancing.

The professor, with a strong effort, mastered his emotions, and told Jim, quietly, that he could go. So Jim went out and told his mother the whole story, which proved so animating and exciting to her, that she sent for Betsy Wood at once, who told her fortune three times, past, present, and future, and who saw Professor Muir's form in it every time.

But the professor himself did not take any tea that night. No, after Jim left, he took two or three quick turns through the room, and then exclaimed, aloud: —

"What an idiot I am, to be so moved by a child's talk. I will go there myself, at once; I will not wait a moment."

So he took his hat and cloak, and started in the direction of the pretty cottage, the happy path he had trodden so often of late.

There was a bright light in the parlor, and the curtains were not drawn, and as he paused at the little iron gate, he looked up, and saw — oh, miserable, miserable, man! — Dora, his Dora, as he had fondly called her, standing in front of the great pier-glass, and by her side a man with a long, flowing beard. The man's arm was around her waist, and as he looked, he bent down, and kissed her; and Dora laid her beautiful head on his shoulder.

The professor waited to see no more. He turned back toward Villa Eden — lost Eden now — place of wretchedness forevermore.

Never, during his whole life, could he recall how he had reached his room. But reach it he did, at last; and when there, he threw himself, face downwards, upon the sofa; and there he lay, in just that position, till the cold light of dawn shone in, through his chamber window.

Again! again! to have his happiness snatched out of his hands. And mingled with his wretchedness now was that keenest of pangs, that she, his idol, his ideal of all that was purest and most womanly,

was false, was a coquette. If those sweet eyes had not held love for him, then she was a consummate actress, then she had striven to ruin his happiness, had led him on with false hopes to despair. He had been living in a fool's paradise, feeding his heart with false hopes; and all this while, she had a lover. How could he endure it, how could he live!

In the morning he told Mrs. Wells, frightening her nearly into hysterics with his white face, that sudden business of importance called him away, and that he did not know when he should return.

A FAVORABLE CONCLUSION.

He went, and Mrs. Wells, watching him from her chamber lattice, saw that he did not stop at Dora Moulton's cottage, and although his appearance was certainly strange, still she drew a favorable conclusion from this fact, and from his leaving home on the eve of Mrs. Moulton's party.

Betsy Wood also thought it looked favorable. And in Mrs. Wells' tea-cup, that afternoon, Betsy saw "a light-complected man, with blue eyes, sort o' sad, and sort o' smilin' lookin', and a brown moustache and whiskers, and he seems to be about the height of a certain person." She also saw, in the same cup, "a ring entirely closed, which even an infant might know means an offer, and three clear dots in a row, which signifies plainer than words that you, Mrs. Wells,

will get your wish." What that wish was it is needless to say. The supper passed off pleasantly, Mrs. Wells' food was delicious, her tea strong and stimulating, and inspired by that and friendship, Betsy Wood volunteered the prophecy that if Mrs. Wells was not married in less than six months, to a certain person, it would be her own fault. Mrs. Wells, at that, rose from the table, and wrapped up a large "drawing" of the tea, for Betsy to take home with her to try in the morning.

But how fared the professor, as the morning train bore him from Lathrop; away from Dora, with her sweet, false face; away from the hated rival, who had won her from him; away from the busy tongues and gossip, that would soon be busy over the news of her engagement? Alas! his sad, heavy heart went with him wherever he went. Those sweet, wistful eyes, the eyes of his first and only love, went with him too, and at last they drew him back to her. He must see her again, if it made his agony tenfold greater. He must look upon her face again, and hear that sweet voice, if only to hear it say "farewell forever."

So, at last, for it seemed an eternity to him, though it was only the third day of his absence, just at sunset, he left the little station, and walked up to Villa Eden. He had gone, perhaps, half the distance, when he espied a little figure, sitting in a disconsolate position, by the side of the road; and as he approached nearer, he saw it was little Rob, Dora Moulton's small bondman.

The professor was a great favorite with all the small boys and girls of the neighborhood, as well as with the larger ones; and as he drew near, Rob got up, and walked along by his side.

Following blind habit, the first words the professor said were:—

"How is your mistress, Robbie?"

"Oh! she haint well a mite, I guess she worked too hard to the Dorcust Society. There was sights of Dorcusses there, lots to do. She's

been kinder pale ever since that night. I guess she wondered why you didn't come; she 'spected you, I know; seen her out on the west porch, a-lookin' up that way, lots of times; moonlight, you know, that night, bright as a dollar; sights of Dorcusses there; never seen so many of 'em together, in my life. We was jest run over with Dorcusses. Don't see no use of havin' so many of 'em, anyway."

But the professor was not heeding Rob's last words, nor the pensive shadow that was gathering on the small face.

"So she looked for me," the professor was saying to himself. "She wanted me to come, that she might witness my pain and humiliation, at the sight of my happy and successful rival. Oh, Dora, Dora!" he groaned.

This agonized cry of his soul seemed to him to fill the whole world about him. A bird flew past them, up into the thick trees, that bordered one side of the road, through which he and Rob were passing. Its low, sweet song smote the professor's heart with a keen pang. Oh! how he envied it — envied the soulless creature, who knew not how to suffer. "Dora, Dora! my lost Dora!" his heart cried, as softly the south winds swayed the green branches overhead. Brightly the golden sunlight sifted down through the emerald screen. The beauty all about him seemed but to make his agony tenfold deeper, and the words of Enon, when maddened by love and jealous pain, rose to his lips: —

> "Oh, happy heaven! how canst thou see my face?
> Oh, happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?"

Silently he and Rob walked along, between the blossoming hedges. We have said the professor was a brave man — a strong man — and he was; and I think he gave a proof of it now, by rousing himself from his sorrowful musings, and speaking cheerfully to the little fellow by his side.

"So you were resting here, were you, Robbie, when I overtook you?"

"Yes. I have been down to Squire Leland's. I went to carry home Frank Leland's clothes and beerd. Miss Moulting sent me."

"His clothes and beard?"

"Yes, the clothes and beerd Miss Cecile wore, the night of the Dorcust Society. She fooled 'em all; fooled every one of the Dorcusses; acted out a piece dressed up like a feller with a beerd. Asked ten cents for seein' of 'em act it out. They fooled me too. I peeked through the door, the day before, and seen her and Miss Moulting actin' it out; and thought she was a feller; thought so jist as sure's I live and breathe; hope to die this very minute. Miss Moulting seemed to think the world of him. I thought she was his bo, sure as everything. Jim thought so too. Jim and me did — thought she was his bo."

But Robbie was pouring his words now upon the empty air, for the professor was far in advance of him, going toward the cottage, with long strides.

Oh, Mrs. Wells, Mrs. Wells! Mix no more connubial hopes with the ingredients of his muffins and tea-cakes. Look no more for the professor's manly form. Wave that mystic cup no more from the dawning east; rather lift it towards the setting sun, emblem of perishing hopes. The letter M., which you and Betsy saw in its treacherous depths, should have been translated *Mala fide* instead of marriage and Muir. Bend your aching back no more in search of the dewy, four-leaved clover, fair, false oracle, which is to you as but a snare and a delusion. Or, if you have still any faith in those unhallowed rites, wave your tea-cup heroically towards fresh fields and pastures new. Hope springs eternal in the female breast. And haply some clover leaf may yet spring from the rocky earth, and wave, and wave triumphant, over some masculine head, an extremity that shall prove to

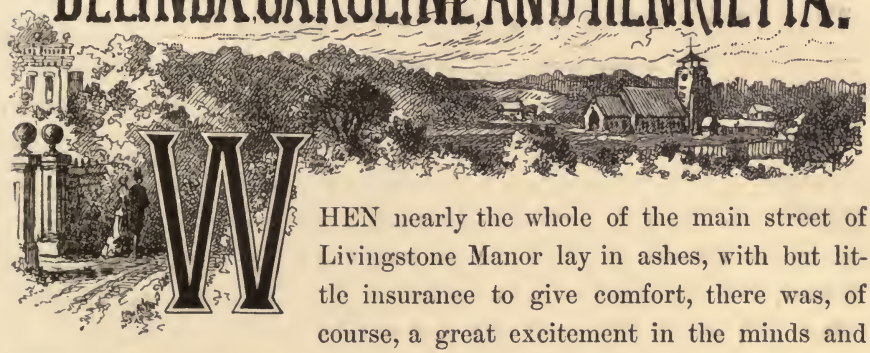
be your opportunity. Men swarm the earth, in all directions, and the voice of widowers is heard in the streets. Do not despair, Mrs. Wells, for feats seemingly impossible are accomplished by the valiant.

But Professor Muir is lost to you. His dreamings have come true. A gentle head is lying upon his manly breast. His heart is beating with tremulous throbs of ecstacy, beneath the rose-leaf pressure of the soft cheek, that lies so confidingly there.

Never, on earth, did brown eyes hold a tenderer love and trust. Never did a truer love, and a warmer admiration, look out of a man's eyes, and glorify a woman's life into a heavenlier existence. Soon, very soon, will his home become what it's name has hitherto falsely prophesied, a Paradise, love-glorified, Villa Eden, indeed.

PERPLEXING QUESTIONS.

BELINDA, CAROLINE AND HENRIETTA.



WHEN nearly the whole of the main street of Livingstone Manor lay in ashes, with but little insurance to give comfort, there was, of course, a great excitement in the minds and hearts of the villagers. But, as time passed on, the village was rebuilt, and peace brooded again over the place. Later, when the lawyer's only daughter eloped with the village shoemaker, the public mind was agitated to an extent rarely witnessed.

But all of these former excitements paled and were as nothing before the furore caused by the announcement that Paul Livingstone was not only coming home to live, after his long sojourning abroad, but was actually engaged to preach to them, in the old stone church which his grandfather had built, and which was the only one in the place. Paul Livingstone's father had been the great man of the place. His stately stone manor-house looked down upon the little village from its sunny oak-crowned eminence, half a mile away. Mr. Livingstone had owned nearly all the village, and had marvelous wealth beside in stocks and lands; but for years he had lived abroad, ever since his young wife died, leaving little Paul to half break his father's heart at first, with the same blue eyes and sweet smile that had faded forever from his sight,

and in time to heal the sharp wounds of his bereavement with his filial love and rare promise. When Paul became of age he chose the profession of the ministry, from pure love to God and humanity. And when his father died, and he came home to the old manor-house to live, and was really engaged to preach in the village church, as we have said, the excitement was fearful, especially among the unmarried females of the village, for he was young, wealthy, and attractive in every way, and rumor said he was not unwilling to wed, but as yet had found no woman to suit his rather fastidious tastes. He was very noble and grand-looking, too, and his handsome, blonde face was filled with a purity and earnestness of expression that would have rendered common features attractive. The few weeks before his first sermon were laborious, anxious weeks to the village dressmaker and milliner. Indeed, the dress-maker, from sheer over-exertion, was in danger of injuring her spine, and, being frightened at her state, she absolutely refused to quill the thirteenth ruffle on Belinda Moss's new poplin dress. She said, openly, that twelve ruffles were all she would undertake. Caroline Winters, who took time by the forelock, succeeded in getting her dress made to suit her, but her bonnet tried her. Her mind was wrought upon, not knowing whether blue or green were most becoming to her complexion. Henrietta Cole was made unhappy to the last moment by the dressmaker absolutely refusing to prune her over-skirt the eighth of an inch Henrietta firmly believing that it would improve it by having it so much shorter.

The day came at last; and it would seem, truly, that the eloquent, earnest, loving words of truth and pleading would lift the minds of his hearers above the petty things of earth and sense. A true, earnest teacher was Paul Livingstone to the people, a loving and devout follower of the Master he had renounced the ambitions of the world to follow. Never had Livingstone Manor witnessed so large a congregation as flocked every Sabbath to hear the young minister; and espe-

cially the young ladies of his flock were hindered not by rain or cloudy winds from punctual attendance. He had not dwelt at Livingstone Manor but a few weeks before he discovered that Hope Winston had the sweetest face and the most wonderfully sweet voice of any young lady in his congregation. After he knew her better he found that her charms of mind and soul far exceeded those which had first attracted him. He thought he had never before met a woman who was so gifted and lovely, and yet so modest and unaffected. He gave saving evidence of this conviction; whereat Belinda Moss remarked to Caroline Winters, that "I never thought Hope Winston anything extra."

Then Belinda found that Caroline had long and silently entertained the same opinion. And as the two chanced to mention this belief of theirs to Henrietta Cole, she went a little further. She mistrusted—but this was in strict confidence,—she mistrusted that Hope wasn't any better than she should be.

The mothers of these young ladies, when the subject was mentioned incidentally to them, reproved their daughters gravely for the sin of evil-speaking, and reminded them, looking benignantly over their spectacles, of the duty of exercising charity. But they ended by declaring that they had thought themselves that Hope, although she was very lady-like and modest in her manners, still she was a little too free to talk to the young minister about poetry and books, and the like. She was a little too free to talk to him, considering he was a man; she actually didn't seem to be a bit more afraid of him than if he was a woman.

And these excellent old ladies, each of whom had lived nearly half a century with one of these fearful beings, men, without being devoured by them, ended with a deep sigh, as if a well-grounded and evident distrust of man was the one thing needful to complete a perfect womanhood.

Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta were rather commonplace women,

and so, as a matter of course, they disliked genius, originality, and enthusiasm in a woman. They detested it, for they feared it bordered upon that dangerous state, the state of being strong-minded. They almost knew Hope was inclined that way; for had she not been overheard to say that she preferred McDonald's and George Eliot's novels to those of Mrs. Holmes; and, as Belinda well remarked, "What right-minded woman ever felt in that way, or would make that remark, unless she were inclined to be strong-minded?" And they felt that they would either of them rather be dead than to be suspected of that, for men so detested strength of mind in a woman. They knew that men loved, above all things, a winning weakness in women. They had read their well-rounded words in praise of doll-women. But still these same men, after spending an evening exclusively in the society of ladies of this type, after listening to the argument, whether to view the subject in all its bearings and its results, clover-leaf tatting is really superior to other varieties of the same species, and if the report is credible and worthy of full belief, that over-skirts are to be worn longer — after listening to this conversation for hours, the advent into the room of such a woman as Hope Winston is hailed by these masculine admirers of feminine weakness with a relief that, considering their belief, is marvelous.

The little village of Livingstone Manor was frequented in summer by sojourners from the neighboring city. Hope could never be anything but gentle and womanly; but when Professor Caldwell, at their little picnics and parties, spoke to her about that last thing of Ruskin, "Have you seen it? Isn't it beautiful, grand?" how her eyes shone and her face kindled. Whereat, old Mrs. Moss, looking on, and who had a dim impression that Ruskin was a new sort of winter apple, greatly wondered and greatly disapproved of Hope's glowing enthusiasm over it. Carl Doran, the young artist, and Charles Hermann, who had a true poet's soul, if not his utterance, found a few hours of Hope's society

more inspiring than any sunset or scenery. Talking with them of books, old and new poets, and, most of all, of that most marvelous book of poetry, old, yet forever new, illustrated as only its author can illustrate it, with wonderful sea views, the glint of blue waves on silvery beaches, sunny valleys, mountain gloom and grandeur, white clouds, and mosses, and all the endless, endless pictures, changeless, yet forever changing, old as creation, yet forever new.

They found, when they left Hope, that the world seemed better and brighter and they more hopeful.

We have all met people who depress us, who make life seem to us like a gloomy march down to a dark grave, who contract the world to suit their own narrow souls, hang it in leaden drapery, sackcloth, and gloom. Take an impressible, sensitive person, and subject him or her to constant companionship with such, and life becomes a dirge, instead of the glorious anthem it should be. But, thank Heaven, there are those who inspire us with a new faith and trust in God and humanity, in the sacredness and divinity of our own life, in whose presence the world grows larger and nobler, full of a boundless possibility for good. Hope was one of these. I think Mrs. Browning must have been thinking of such a woman as Hope when she spoke of one:

> "Who never found fault with you; never implied
> Your wrong by her right; yet men by her side
> Grew nobler, girls purer, as all through the town
> The children were gladder who pulled at her gown."

Now Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta did not care particularly about the earnest respect and admiration Hope received from the gentlemen I have named, for Professor Caldwell had a wife who loved and made a particular pet of Hope. Carl Doran was engaged to a young lady of Boston, Hope's schoolmate and warm friend. And as for Charles Hermann, Hope had refused him, but retained him as a close friend still, for with such a woman as Hope it is possible for a lover to

change to a friend, but never to an enemy. But when the young minister, whose favor they more desired than any other sublunary thing, forsook their society for that of Hope, Belinda remarked to Henrietta, "It is aggravating, considering what we have done for him, and Hope has never worked a single stitch for him."

When Belinda made this remark, the young minister had been with them some six months, and each of the young ladies, Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta, had presented him with two pairs of slippers, lavish in embroidery, in which the high price of zephyr was accounted as nothing. They had also given him a cashmere dressing-gown, silk-lined, glorious with more colors than Joseph's coat. It was, indeed, as Belinda said, "aggravating."

Now, after having said that "Hope isn't any better than she should be," of course it became their first duty and privilege to prove the fact; for it is an impulse of our nature, when we have made an assertion, to endeavor to substantiate it with all the proof possible. But they found it exceedingly difficult to do so in this case, so quiet, and ladylike, and exemplary was Hope's conduct, and so well beloved was she by all her friends, except, indeed, those who were aggravated by the young minister's attentions to her. But they were watchful, hopeful, that at last their zealous search after some suspicious circumstance would be rewarded with success.

I think Hope, sensitive, tender-hearted Hope, could hardly fail, with her woman's intuitions, to discern their state of mind toward her, and to be annoyed by their petty hints and malice. But above the low grounds, where buzzing insects sting, and darken the atmosphere, and vex the soul with their petty, meaningless whirlings, and circles, and tiny stabs, there is a calmer, purer air, that blows from diviner realms, sweet with glimpses of heavenlier skies. Hope breathed the higher, clearer air habitually. And so, as she had always done, she carried her sweet face, like sunshine, into the homes of those who loved her, prized

her as she deserved, and like one of God's angels into the abodes of want and dolor.

The Witch of Endor was once permitted to speak to Saul; and when success at last crowned Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta, these

BELINDA READS THE LETTER.

earnest seekers after darkness, it was only proper that Belinda should be the vehicle through which this darkness should be made manifest.

She was passing Judge Winston's. It was a lovely spring day, and they were cleaning house; as she passed, she saw a housemaid

framed in the empty window of Hope's room, like a full-length picture of Labor, washing the window-casing.

At this moment a paper, evidently part of a letter, came fluttering along in the light wind, over the syringas, under a clump of lilacs, over a bed of fragrant English violets, down under the maples, through the palings, directly to Belinda's feet. Here a clump of tall, delicate grasses, through some loving kinship of nature to Hope, would have fain concealed it. But Belinda's fingers, though not so spotless, were stronger. She took it up, and read:

"Dearest Hope, — My wife has gone to-day, visiting some gossiping crone just like herself, and I improve the welcome solitude to write to you, my love, my darling."

It was quite a long letter, filled with passionate avowals of love, a love that was a crime.

As Belinda read this letter, she was, to outward appearances, an ordinary young lady, with elaborately frizzed hair. Nothing demoniac in her appearance. But I think that He who reads our hearts discovered in her a strong likeness to that evil spirit who rejoices in all human sin.

Belinda was happy. I think Satan himself could not be happier than she in this crime she had discovered. True, it looked more like a woman's writing than it did like a man's; but that was only an added proof of her guilt; it was a disguised hand.

There was a sewing-circle that afternoon. Hope was away for a few days, visiting an aunt, and her mother's unusual work would be likely to keep her at home. Belinda was happy. She went to the sewing-circle early. There were but few present beside Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta, and their mothers. As is usual on these bloodless battle-fields, needles and tongues were sharpened meet for the occasion, and moved rapidly. When a woman has a secret to keep, she yearns to have other women help her keep it. Belinda was anxious, but still she

wanted to restrain her triumph to an appearance of moderation, and not seem abrupt and over-anxious to complete Hope's downfall. Many absent women — and house-cleaning made many absent — were dealt with as was considered proper and needful, but still Belinda spoke not. But at last the conversation took a turn that gradually led to her communication. There was a new book just out, "The Story of a Wrecked Life," that had proven to be more than a success. There was an enthusiasm of admiration concerning it, and curiosity concerning its author, for it was published anonymously. Most of those present had read it, and all admired it, not that all had heart and soul enough to appreciate it, but because it was the fashion, and therefore the proper thing to admire it.

Mrs. Beazely, whose sister was housekeeper at the Manor House, said to Belinda, that the minister was dreadful took with it. He thought there was a freshness and originality about it not often met; and he said that "whoever the writer is, she is a true and earnest woman, who lives for some purpose in life."

"Yes, it contains a good deal of religious truth," said Henrietta Cole. "But Hope Hartly is a very poor character."

Then Belinda felt that her hour had come. She rose equal to the occasion. One mysterious, meaning glance she gave to the assembled women, then she said, in the short, terse sentences a deep purpose gives, "I guess there are other bad characters besides her."

They all felt that this remark of Belinda was not a trifling one, made simply to propel the car of conversation. Woman's unerring intuition taught them that here was some other women to be dealt with by them. They asked her at once, who she meant? who was it?

Now Belinda, like other wise men and women, on finding herself the object of first importance, did not reveal her meaning immediately, and by so doing come down upon a level with the rest. She played with their curiosity as a cat plays with a captive mouse. Finally, after she

had goaded them nearly to desperation, she said, with complacency:

"I guess there are other bad characters by the name of Hope."

And so the truth came out. The letter was produced, set upon by this voluntary inquest, and Hope was unanimously condemned. And,

"IT DON'T LOOK WELL."

as is usual with a lost cause, divers enormities were brought against her, which the speakers had heretofore passed unnoticed in their blindness. Old Mrs. Cole thought "it never has looked well for her to be a riding off so much out in the country on her pony. It might be all right, but it don't look well."

"That is so," said old Mrs. Moss; and it is believed that nearly all the other women repeated, "That is so."

Old Mrs. Winters, who lived on the borders of the woodland, said, "Time and time again, I have ketched her a comin' from the woods with her apron full of moss and ferns, and such ordinary trash. If she wanted posys, why didn't she come to me for merrygoolds and China Oysters?"

This speech was well received by every woman in the room.

Then old Mrs. Moss said that, "though I have always considered Hope a likely girl, still I think she has too many letters to look well for a woman, sometimes as many as three at one time, I have been told. And, though she always seems pleasant enough, and friendly, still I believe in my soul Hope feels above her neighbors, for she never seems to take half the comfort a visitin' 'em as she does when she is with them stuck-up city friends of hers."

"Stuck up" was Mrs. Moss's synonym for intellect, culture, and refinement.

Before that charmed circle broke up, a plan was laid, of which, although no officers were named and lawfully appointed, Belinda Moss might be considered president, Henrietta Cole vice-president, and Caroline Winters secretary. They were not content with having the fact of Hope's iniquities published abroad. They yearned to humiliate her publicly; and, simply as a matter of justice, it must be before the young minister.

The village choir was very small at present, owing to the sickness of some of the members and the absence of others. Indeed, at the present time, the three young ladies we have named and Hope constituted all the female element, the male members being the three brothers of Henrietta and the father and brother of Belinda. They would all refuse to sing the next Sabbath, and have it plainly understood that they would not sing in the same choir with Hope Winston.

They guessed that would open the young minister's eyes. They guessed that would take the "scales off of 'em." Possibly, after this, he would think there was some other woman in the world beside Hope Winston; he didn't seem to think there was now. And as for her, wouldn't she be so ashamed and mortified that she wouldn't know where to put her head?

The next Sabbath rose calm and cloudless, and fair and serene as the morn. Hope went up the little flight of steps into the old-fashioned gallery. She was rather late, though. Her innocent little heart rather condemned her for it, for she was not belated by any sickness or calamity. She had only returned home from her visit late the night before, and had overslept herself. So, when she reached the church, she found the service already begun. She waited in the porch till the prayer was ended, and then she went up the little steps into the gallery. Not a soul was there, only the little tow-headed boy who blowed the organ. The young minister looked up, and his eyes met hers. He hesitated for a moment, and then, evidently wishing to save her any embarrassment, he opened his MSS., and commenced his sermon.

What was the matter? Had some sudden pestilence taken off all the choir? Hope looked over the railing of the gallery. There was Caroline Winter's blue bonnet below, Belinda's and Henrietta's white straw ones. The male members were also living, and apparently in sound health. In common times, Hope would not whisper in church; but now curiosity got the better of her, and she asked Johnny Watts if he knew why the choir were not in their places.

Johnny loved her—all children loved Hope—and he, loyal soul, burning with indignation, told her all, or all he knew, which was enough to prove to her that gossip had done its worst. All through the sermon, and it was no common one, I assure you—Paul Livingstone never preached a common sermon—Hope sat with her head bent down upon her clasped hands. But after the last prayer, as the young minis-

ter looked up inquiringly again into the gallery, Hope rose and walked to the old organ, and seated herself. The choir were wont to select the closing piece. Johnny, who felt that he could show his respectful homage and reverent affection for Hope only by blowing his loudest and strongest, put forth such giant strength that the organ pealed forth in clarion tones, filling the church with its melody. But above it Hope's wonderfully sweet voice rose, singing:

HOPE AT THE ORGAN.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Many of the congregation thought that there had been some misunderstanding, such as is not unusual in choirs; and such applauded Hope's bravery in doing her duty regardless of all others. But others thought, and the young minister among them, that Hope gave these beautiful words a meaning and a power they had never had before. Such a perfect, child-like trust in the Good Shepherd, such an earnest faith that she "should not want" anything needful for her, and that there was no possibility of her being harmed by anything while His hand was leading her.

As she came down out of the gallery and faced the congregation, all that her voice had expressed was written in her countenance. All who looked into that pure, spiritual face knew that her Lord was indeed leading her by still waters, for their peace was reflected in her eyes.

The young minister was beset, as usual, by Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta, and sundry other young female sheep of his flock. But, as he caught sight of Hope's pale, glowing face, he left them with a hasty apology, and went up to her, greeting her with more respect and deference than he had ever shown her before. Talking to her still, he passed out of the church porch, and left her only at her own door.

Belinda thought, "after all that has been said about Hope, after all that has been proved about her, it is a shameful piece of business, and aggravating." It is supposed that Caroline and Henrietta entertained the same opinion. But, although this plan had failed, and Hope was not only not humiliated in the eyes of the young minister and the world, but had actually triumphed over them and turned her ignominy into victory, yet, "Thank fortune!" they said, "we can come right out and speak plain, and we will. Next Tuesday night the letter shall be produced, and Hope shall see it, and the young minister shall see it, and see then how she will feel—see then if she can lift up her head."

So spoke justice, in the form of Belinda Moss, not as commonly painted, with one eye bandaged, but with both eyes wide open, looking into the sympathizing orbs of Caroline and Henrietta.

On Tuesday evening there was to be a meeting for a charitable purpose, and Hope and her mother were not to be hindered from doing their duty by any fear of what man, or rather woman, should do unto them. Belinda went early, and she had the letter in her possession, but Caroline and Henrietta were also suffered to share in the honor of its possession, and were regarded with some jealousy by a couple of female cousins of Caroline, who were present, who could boast no further con-

nection with it, only they had read it, as had all of those present. With Hope and her mother came the young minister, which so worked upon Belinda's excitable feelings that she went directly up to Hope, and, presenting the letter to her like a musket, asked her, with the voice of an avenger and the mien of a Nemesis:

"Is that your property?"

Hope took the letter, glanced at it, and then said simply:

"Yes, it is my property."

"I told you so," said Belinda, looking round triumphantly. And it is believed that Henrietta and Caroline also said, "I told you so."

Hope's face was calm as ever, only there was a pink flush on each cheek, that made her look more beautiful than usual, even. She folded up the paper, and leaned her hand on the back of a chair by which she was standing, and commenced to say—and her voice was low and sweet as ever:

"In explaining how this letter came in my possession—"

But, before she could add another word, the young minister came forward and laid his own hand tenderly, protectingly upon Hope's, and said, in very distinct tones, as he turned his handsome face toward the inquisitors:

"Hope—Miss Winston has promised me to let me care for her through all her life and mine, and so anything that affects her cannot fail to be of interest to me. Whatever annoyance or trial you may see fit to bring upon her, it is my privilege and my happiness to share it with her."

If Belinda's dress had not been made of the thickest of poplin, it must needs have given way under the tremendous muffled beatings of her heart. She was, for the first time in the memory of man, beyond words. But the vice-president came nobly to her relief.

"Read that letter, and see what she receives from a married man."

The young minister turned to Hope. She smiled.

"I will explain it, Paul," she said.

"No, no," he interrupted, "you shall not explain. Do you think I could doubt you, Hope?"

But she continued, gently: —

"I think it will be better, and set the minds of our friends here more at rest. But in order to explain how this letter came to be written, I shall have to reveal a little matter that I have kept secret for reasons which it is needless to name ——"

"Yes, needless to name," said Belinda. "You *dassent* name them, that's it."

"Yes," says the vice-president, "she *dassent*."

And the voice of the secretary sounded from the other side of the room, like a distant echo, "she *dassent*."

The young minister's face flushed red, and he was about to speak, but Hope detained him by saying: —

"Well, then, if you insist upon it, I will explain fully. You have, most of you, read 'The Story of a Wrecked Life!' I think, in reading that book, you will find a letter written to the wretched heroine, Hope Hartly, in nearly the same words as this. I am the author of that book. I wrote it for a purpose;" and Hope's face lighted up, as it did in the old church as she sang, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Her voice grew a little tremulous, in speaking of these things, so near her heart. But she went on: —

"It seemed to me that I could do a little good by writing it. The world seemed to me to be so full of sin and wretchedness; my heart ached so for God's erring and sorrowful; I wanted to do something, write something, that would help these poor creatures to remember that they were God's children still, and Heaven was still possible to them. I thought, perhaps, if I wrote lovingly, prayerfully,

as in His name, they would listen, and it seemed to me to be more sacred, more as if it were, indeed, His message, if no one but God and the angels knew who wrote it."

Here Hope seemed suddenly to remember that to most of her hearers her generous enthusiasm was an unknown tongue. So she finished, by saying, in a few words, "this letter, which I changed some and re-wrote, was doubtless thrown out of my room in house-cleaning, with other old papers."

That night, on her return from the meeting, Hope stood upon the portico. She had turned to bid her companion good-night. Her

THE THREE DRABBLED DAMSELS.

white scarf, which she had thrown over her head, had fallen back, and the moon, shining out just at that moment, fell full upon her beautiful face, her large inspired eyes.

Paul was standing upon the step beneath her, and as he looked up to her, holding her hand in his, he said: —

"Hope, if I do not respect you more, and love you better, after to-night, it is because I could not."

As they stood thus, three drabbled damsels passed by, in a melancholy procession. When I say drabbled, I speak not unadvisedly,

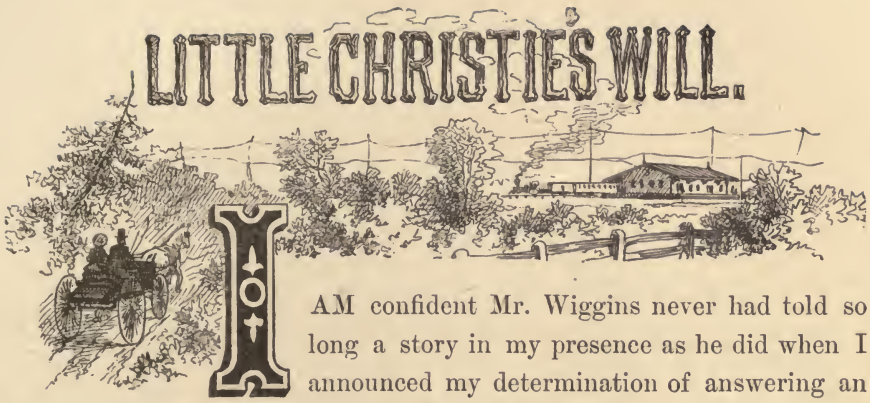
for a light rain had fallen during the evening, and, in their gloomy state of mind, these damsels had forgotten to hold up their dresses.

The limp, water-soaked trails of muslin and poplin were not bad exponents of their feelings. They felt dejected, low-spirited, unhappy.

But let us hope that as our trials, and sometimes even our errors, are transformed by a benignant Providence to stepping-stones, by which we rise to a higher life—let us hope that Belinda, Caroline, and Henrietta, by this experience, became wiser in that divine wisdom of charity, that "thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

MY HEART WAS IN MY THROAT.

LITTLE CHRISTIE'S WILL.



I AM confident Mr. Wiggins never had told so long a story in my presence as he did when I announced my determination of answering an advertisement for a governess. He and his wife were opposed to my leaving them; and this story was concerning a young girl who went as governess, and died from over-work. But the story he told as he was carrying me to the cars even exceeded that in length. The story was just five miles long, for we reached the depot and its conclusion at the same time. Nor did we come a second too soon. Mr. Wiggins had driven at a snail's pace for the last mile, in order that he might finish his narrative. The station-master, as we drew up, bade us make haste, if we didn't want to be left; and soon the last words were spoken, and I was alone; for the loneliest forest is not comparable to the loneliness of a great crowd; for dear Nature's face is always kindly to those who love her.

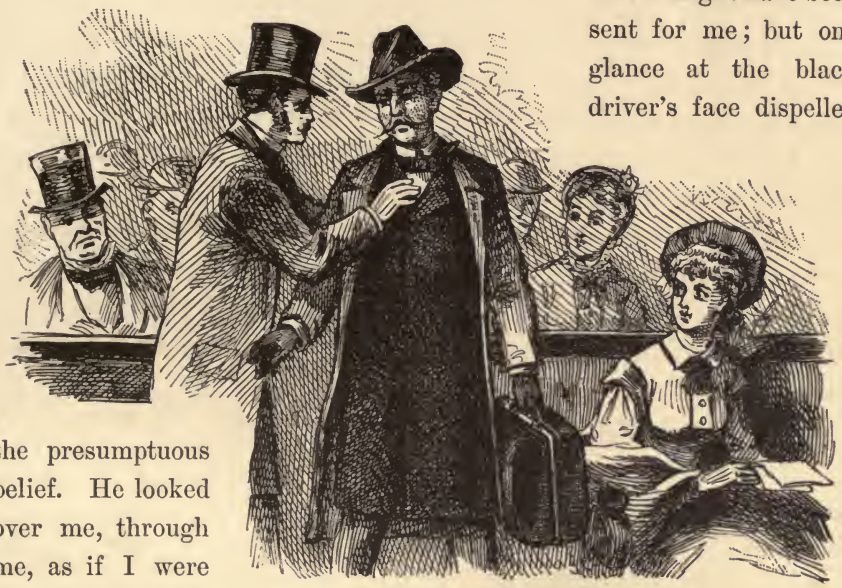
I felt utterly desolate and friendless as I sank back in my seat in the cars. I was an orphan, with few friends, and was going out as a governess. In my depressed state, that morning, the name of my new employer seemed more awe-inspiring and aristocratic than ever before.

"Claude Huntington." I felt instinctively that he would be a tall, pompous, elderly man, with piercing, coal-black eyes and fierce whiskers, colored to a jetty hue. And "Christabelle," the daughter, — how could I, plain Eva Norris, ever make myself useful or agreeable to a "Christabelle Huntington." He had mentioned in his last letter that Elfrida Winthrop, his cousin and ward, was an inmate of his house. He thought it would be pleasant for me to know I was to have a young lady companion. But every name struck terror to my heart. I felt, at that lonely moment, like the smallest of Gulliver's Lilliputians, setting out alone for the country of the giants. I took Mr. Huntington's letter out of my pocket, and was forlornly reading it over, when suddenly a new atmosphere of warmth and brightness seemed to enwrap me, coming from what wondrous realm I knew not. But looking up, I became conscious of the earnest gaze of a pair of dark-blue eyes. Of course, the owner of those eyes, a very handsome young man, averted them at once, as I became conscious of his earnest scrutiny. I hold that friends are not made, but discovered. Friends of our soul, — the world may have been between us all our days, but when we meet we know each other. I put the letter with its green and gold monogram into my pocket, and drew my veil over my face again. But the old dreary loneliness had gone. Absurd, wasn't it? But then this strange old world is so full of wonderful things, that if you set yourself about trying to explain all its mysteries, you will have no time for anything else.

At the next station a half-drunken man came into the cars. He was dressed like a gentleman, and probably was one when sober. He came up to the seat where I was, and paused before it, as if intending to seat himself beside me. But I had only time to give one frightened glance, when the blue-eyed, handsome stranger opposite left his seat, and, laying his hand on the man's shoulder, said, "Take my seat, colonel, I am tired of sitting." And half impelled by the firm hand upon his shoulder, the tipsy colonel sank into the vacant seat. One

look of gratitude I gave my unknown friend, who walked forward and stood a few minutes by the car-door, and then passed out on the platform.

I thought no one left the cars but myself at the little wayside station; and as there was but one carriage in sight, an elegant one, I fancied it might have been sent for me; but one glance at the black driver's face dispelled the presumptuous belief. He looked over me, through me, as if I were an incorporeal substance, through which landscapes might be enjoyed. He was very grand and dignified and I felt very small and insignificant. But even as I looked he leaped down and opened the carriage-door; and at that moment I heard a light, quick step behind me, and, glancing round, there stood my handsome, blue-eyed stranger. He lifted his hat as he approached, and said, as courteously as if I were a queen:



"TAKE MY SEAT, COLONEL."

"Pardon me, but I think you are Miss Norris?"

I bowed affirmatively.

"Allow me to introduce myself as Mr. Huntington, your correspondent. I am very glad you came earlier than we expected you. We looked for you to-morrow."

"I thought you wrote for me to come on the thirteenth."

"I dare say the mistake was mine," said he. "My writing, I fear, might be improved by judicious training."

He assisted me into the carriage, and, after leaving some directions about having my trunk sent on immediately, he entered himself, and the prancing grays dashed off through the quiet country road. For a few minutes we drove on in silence, and then my companion, looking at me with his peculiarly earnest gaze, said:

"How do you suppose that I knew you, Miss Norris, the minute I saw you on the cars, though we didn't expect you to-day? Something told me, instinctively, who you were. I don't think I ever had such an impression before in regard to any one. Perhaps we were friends a thousand years ago, in some former state of existence. Can your philosophy account for it in any other way?"

"Perhaps you recognized your letter that I was reading," said I, prosaically.

"That only confirmed the impression; I had the conviction before."

Perhaps I showed in my face my desire to change the subject, for he commenced to talk very pleasantly about the country through which we were passing. And then he told me about my pupil. He said she was an invalid, through an injury to her spine, received when an infant; and so he did not want her to study any more than her health would permit. But his business took him from home a good deal, and he wanted some one he could trust to leave her with.

"She is sadly spoiled, I am afraid," said he; "but the doctors have forbidden all excitement, so we don't dare to cross her. She is naturally very affectionate; but, from having her own way all the time, she

has become as imperious as a little queen. Three ladies have had the kindness to try to teach her; but they failed to suit her, and I didn't dare to keep them after they became disagreeable to her. I felt that I ought to tell you this before you entered upon your duties, because, although I think you will please her, and you will be good friends, still, if you should fail, believe me, I shall know it is not your fault."

I thanked him for his kindness, but, mentally, I saw myself following my predecessors out of Huntington Manor.

It was a large mansion, of light-gray stone, fairly embowered in foliage and bloom. The grounds were spacious and beautiful, and, as we drove up the long avenue, I could catch a glimpse, through openings in the green shade, of summer-houses, fountains, and statues. As we passed up the long flight of white marble steps into the grand hall, Mr. Huntington turned to me, and said, with a smile:

"Welcome to Huntington Manor, Miss Norris." And then, calling a servant, he directed him to show me to my room. I was grateful for this, for I wanted to make some changes in my dress before I met the ladies of the family. He had said that my trunk would be there in a few minutes. But I had only taken off my wrappings, and was just bathing my face, when a particularly wakeful looking girl came in and said:—

JUDITH.

"Miss Christie wants to see you at once. She aint so well as common to-day; and she said she couldn't wait a minute, if you please, mam."

I brushed my curls a little back from my face, and turned to follow her, and, as I did so, I discovered the reason of her uncommonly wide-awake, watchful look. She had no eye-winkers, her eyelids being as destitute of ornament as her little turned-up nose.

She led the way nearly the length of the upper hall, and then opened a door into a large, pleasant room, and there, lying upon a crimson sofa, was my pupil. As we entered, she had one arm around her father's neck, and he was bending over her, telling her something in a low voice. But she turned, hearing our steps, and I saw a pretty, but rather old-looking face for a child of seven years. She was very pretty, indeed, had it not been for a rather querulous expression in the large, gray eyes and sensitive mouth. Mr. Huntington rose and drew a chair forward for me by the sofa.

LITTLE CHRISTIE.

"You see you have a very impatient little pupil, Miss Norris. I tried to persuade her to wait till you were rested a little; but she thought she couldn't possibly wait a minute longer; and the queen must be obeyed, mustn't she, Christie?"

I took her mite of a white hand in mine, and bent down and kissed her. As I did so, she took up one of my long curls, and drew it through her fingers, and said, thoughtfully, more to herself than to us:

"I am glad she is pretty. The last one was awful in looks; but I think she was a Christian."

"You see she is appreciative, Miss Norris."

"What is that, papa?"

Her father explained the meaning of the word to her, and she said, with a relieved look:

"Oh, yes; there are several large words I don't understand yet."

Again she read my face earnestly, searchingly; and then she said again, as if talking to herself:

"I think I shall like her. I think I shall."

But still there was a doubting emphasis on the words, sufficient to discourage any undue hopes. I didn't really know what to say next to my wise little pupil; but Mr. Huntington relieved my embarrassment, which I think was evident, by saying:

"Now you have seen your new teacher, Christie, you want her to go to her room and rest a while before dinner, don't you? She must be very tired."

"Oh, yes, you may go," said she, with the air of an obliging empress; and then she said to her father:

"Do you think, papa, you could take me up and rock me a while, and tell me a story?"

"Certainly I can, and will." And as I left the room he was telling her about a wonderful fairy princess.

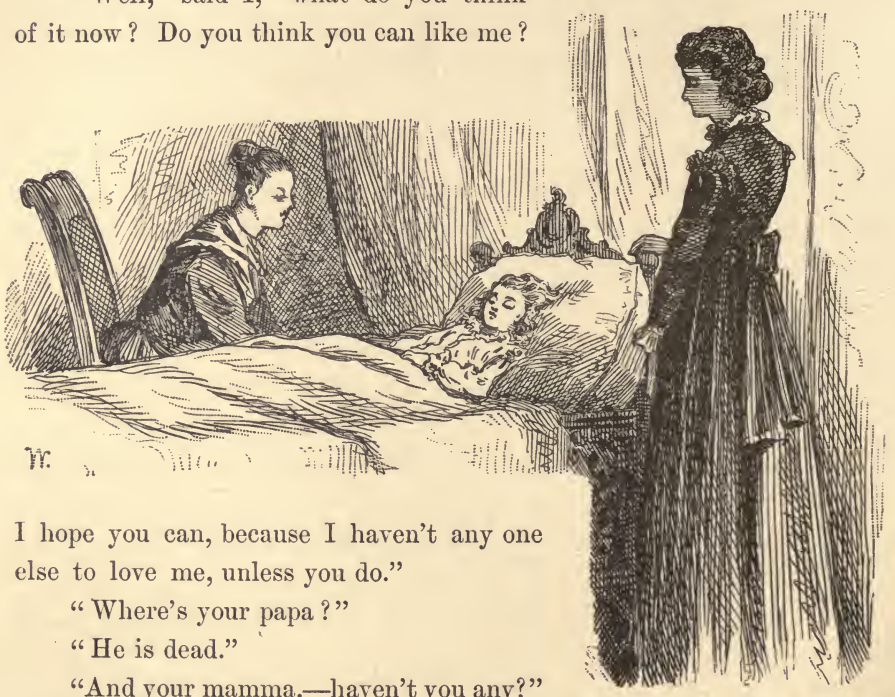
At dinner I met Miss Winthrop. She was a calm-eyed young lady, with an evident consciousness that Elfrida Winthrop was certainly equal, if not superior, to any other young lady of her acquaintance. But I liked her very much. She seemed so strong and self-reliant, that, to my rather dependent nature, she was very fascinating.

That evening I went into Christie's room again. She was asleep, and the watchful-eyed Judith, who I found was Christie's particular attendant, sat beside her.

I stood looking down upon her, thinking how very beautiful she was asleep, for the fretful, discontented expression caused by her pain

had all vanished, when she suddenly opened her eyes and looked up at me. I smiled down upon her; but her upward glance into my face was as solemn and earnest as if she was settling the fate of a nation.

"Well," said I, "what do you think of it now? Do you think you can like me?



I STOOD LOOKING DOWN UPON HER

I hope you can, because I haven't any one else to love me, unless you do."

"Where's your papa?"

"He is dead."

"And your mamma,—haven't you any?"

"No, she is dead."

"Who did you live with, then, before you came here?"

"I lived out in the country, where my mother died, the place where we were boarding."

"I have got a cousin, and she loves me some, I suppose. Haven't you got any cousins?"

"No; I have no relatives at all."

I saw by her countenance that she was relinquishing all hopes of shirking the responsibility upon any one else, and she said, rather slowly:

"Well, if there isn't any one else, I will; and now you may kiss me, if you want to."

Judith's wakeful eyes twinkled with admiration at her mistress, and delight at my unparalleled success with her.

The next day I commenced my duties, which were very light. Some days Christie was too ill to have any lessons at all; but when she was well enough, I taught her for a few hours. Mr. Huntington treated me as gently and courteously as if I had been a princess, instead of plain Eva Norris, a governess. And Elfrida Winthrop I found a very agreeable companion, and a study, she was so utterly unlike any other woman I had ever met. She seemed so open and sincere, I thought, "here, at least, is a woman who has no concealments." I was certain any one could look down through those clear, gray eyes into her soul, and find no sentimental secrets there, such as other young girls delight in. She had a great admiration for "Cousin Claude," which she expressed fully and warmly. She said she could never even imagine him doing any act otherwise than nobly and greatly.

"He is the noblest man I ever knew," said she, one day, "although, like other men, he has a will of his own." Something in her tone, as she said this, made me fancy that sometime in her past that will had met her own in opposition.

So the days passed by, until I had been with them nearly a year. I had had no trouble with Christie, for I loved the child. Here, I think, is where my worthy predecessors had failed; they tried to make her love them, with no love on their side; but I loved her, and my love won hers. Her quaint, unchildlike ways touched my fancy; her weakness appealed to my compassion. She grew to be very dear to me. Perhaps there was another reason, deep down in my heart, that made me love the child so well; hidden deeper than the depths of the seas, I said it should always be, since it was so vain—so vain.

But I said it should make me better. If it brought me pain, it

UNDER THE PALM TREE.

should make me better, nobler, purer. I believe it did; for all earthly love, dim shadow as it is of the one love above, is still a reflection of the Infinite.

In the late autumn of the year, Mr. Huntington's business called him West, and Elfrida received a pressing invitation from a school friend to pass the winter with her at Washington. And as Christie's health seemed poorer of late, Mr. Huntington proposed that I should go with her to Cuba and pass the cold weather. A friend of his, a minister, was going for his health with his family, and it would be a good opportunity for us to have company. So it was decided; and the last week of November found us in Cuba—Christie, Judith, and I.

That winter in Cuba I shall never forget. Our life was so quiet and dreamful, and separate from the confusion of the world. But Christie grew weaker, and after a while the fountain with the palm-tree, a favorite spot with her, was too far for the little feet. And finally, as the spring came, she did not leave her room. But the

change was so gradual, so peaceful, that we, who were with her all the time, could hardly realize it.

One evening, Christie lay asleep on the lounge, which had been drawn out into the room, and Judith and I sat upon either side of it, looking down into the sweet face, with its halo of golden hair, which to-night seemed to me to be crowning her for a life more beautiful than ours.

Judith sat leaning forward, with her elbows upon her knees, and her dress drawn tightly round them. Her shelterless eyes seemed more watchful and wakeful than ever, and finally she broke the profound silence by saying, abruptly:

"Do you suppose that old, hateful thing is in heaven?"

"Why, what do you mean, Judith? Who are you talking about?"

"I am talking about Miss Huntington, the one that brought this pretty lamb to where she is."

"Let us hope so," said I.

"I don't know as I hope so at all. I have my doubts of it. I haint a cherib nor a serophin. Mebby she'd be a throwin' the little angels on to the floor, and knockin' off their wings. Hateful, jealous old thing!"

I had never encouraged confidences from servants, yet enough had been said in my presence to make me aware how wretched Mr. Huntington's marriage had been. Although the sin is no worse in the sight of a pure God, yet custom makes a woman-drunkard seem more horrible than a man in the same condition. She was beautiful, imperious, dissipated. Jealous of her husband's affection for their beautiful child, for, discovering her worthlessness, all his affectionate heart turned to their child, she flung it at him one day in a drunken rage. It fell to the marble hearth, and was injured for life.

"Oh, what a time that was!" said Judith. "You ought to have seen Mr. Huntington's face. It was white as the baby's, but he never said a word. He picked up the baby, and laid it on the lounge, and rung for the housekeeper; and then he took Miss Huntington by the arm and led her into her room, she a strugglin' all the time like a evil spirit; and he locked her in there, and not a soul see her for two days, only he and I. He told the doctor and housekeeper and all that the baby got hurt by a fall. But

"OH! WHAT A TIME THAT WAS."

if it hadn't been for makin' him more trouble, who is a saint on earth, if there ever was one, wouldn't I have told the whole of it?"

"We will not talk about it any more," said I, gently.

But Judith could not be restrained.

"She might have knocked me up against the wall, and pulled my ears off, as she often did," said Judith, forgetful that the members whose loss she thus deplored were plainly visible, lashed to the present,

as it were, by large hoops of a doubtful metal. "I haint of much account any way; but when I look at this sweet lamb, and think what she might have been if it hadn't been for that mean, spiteful—"

"Hush, Judith, our enmity should stop at the grave. Mr. Huntington has certainly been injured most, but he never speaks of her."

But again Judith loudly protested "that she was neither a saint nor a serophin."

I bent over Christie and listened to her unsteady breathing. "Have you noticed, Judith? I think she is failing very fast of late."

"Haint I been noticing it every day?" And throwing her apron over her head, she burst into such loud grief that, fearful lest she should waken Christie, I was obliged to ask her to leave the room.

That night I wrote to Mr. Huntington; and as soon as his answer reached us, and we could make needful preparations, we were on our way to New York.

When we had once started for home, Christie was very impatient to get there. Every day she would ask me, I know not how many times, "Eva, will we get home to-morrow?"

One night—it was the second night out—we were alone, for Judith had lain down. Christie was lying still. I didn't know whether she was asleep or not. I was writing to Elfrida. It was a quiet, starlight night, and the soft sighing of the wind, and the low wash of the water against the side of the boat, filled the room. Suddenly, Christie spoke out, as if in answer to some one:

"Yes, yes! I will come. I am coming."

I rose and bent over her. "What is it, dear? Were you dreaming?"

"No, no! Some one called me. Who was it, Eva? Where did that voice come from?" said she, looking up into my face with her solemn, spiritual eyes. "It said, 'Come, Christie. Come, dear little child?' Who was it, Eva?"

"Maybe it was the water against the side of the boat. Hear it now."

She listened a moment to the low, murmurous splash of the waves, and then she shook her head.

"No! It comes from way, way off," said she, waving her little thin hand outward. "And yet I heard it so plain — plainer than I do you. Who is it, Eva, that is calling me?"

I laid my face close down to hers, on the pillow, and soothed her with all the loving words I could think of, and then I sang to her, in a low voice, her favorite song — her "birdie song," as she called it.

"Birdie, wait a little longer
Till the little wings are stronger,
Birdie then shall fly away."

As I sang this she fell asleep. I know not whether she dreamed this, whether it was imagination, or if, indeed, over the waste of waters we have no line to fathom, there came a voice of greeting to the little, lonely bark, that was so fast nearing the heavenly shore. But she failed very fast after this night.

Mr. Huntington met us at New York. And as he looked at Christie first, his face was as white as hers; even my letters had not prepared him for the change in her. Christie sprang into his arms in such a passion of laughter and tears that it shook her frail form, and it required all the calmness and cheerfulness that he could assume to soothe her into quiet.

How gentle, and tender, and loving, he was to her, and to me too! But I, who knew his noble, chivalrous nature, it did not deceive me. I said all this kindness and tenderness were only flowers, white flowers that I might lay upon that grave in my heart; and if they were watered by my own tears, why no one would ever know it. I said I had a right to weep over my own dead, if I troubled no one about it.

We had been at home just one week. All day Christie had been restless, some of the time delirious, with intervals of consciousness. Elfrida had lain down, for she was not well, and Mr. Huntington and I were alone with the child. At twilight she revived, and said to her father, in a voice that sounded like herself: —

"I am tired. When will he come, papa?"

"Who, darling?"

"The strong man Eva told me about. She said he would carry me in his arms."

Mr. Huntington bent over her until his cheek touched hers.

"Don't cry, papa. Where's Eva? Eva, come here."

I rose from the sofa, where I had been weeping, silently, and came and knelt down by her. She looked up lovingly into my face, and put up her little, weak hand, and passed it gently over my face.

"I love you, Eva."

Then she sank again into that state that was neither waking nor sleeping. And we thought she seemed to be again in Cuba, for she murmured something about the fountain, and the palm-trees. But pretty soon she looked up again, and said: —

"Don't cry, Eva."

As she saw my tears still falling, perhaps some remembrance of the first night we met may have come back to her — when I told her I had no one to love me; and she may have thought pityingly of my loneliness, when I should not have her to love me, for the little mind, so nearly unmoored from earthly supports, seemed drifting through the past and the future, for she said, musingly: —

"There won't be anybody then. Papa, will you love Eva, when there isn't any body else to love her?"

"Yes, darling."

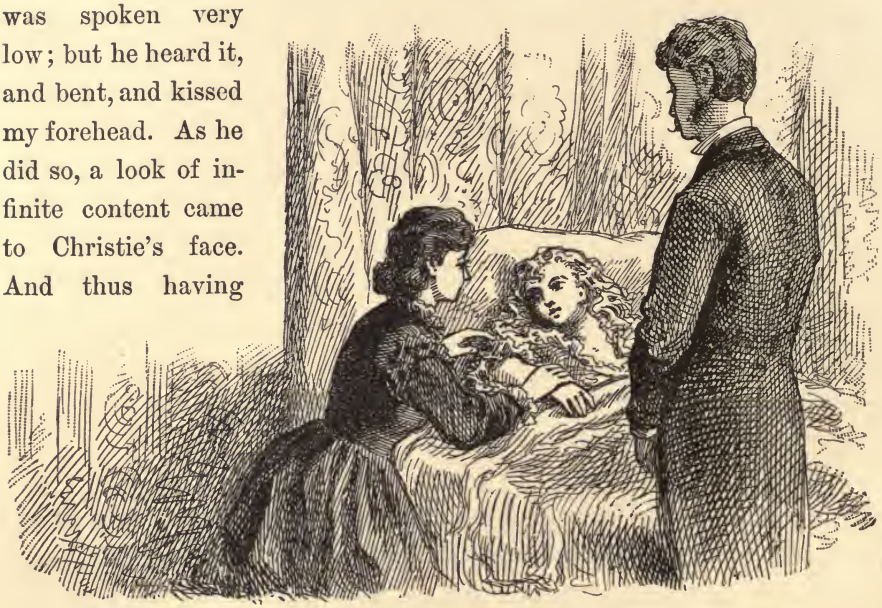
But, feeling that her little duties were not fully accomplished, she turned to me: —

"Eva, you will love papa, won't you?"

I bent lower over her, for I felt at that moment that my secret that I had buried might possibly be revealed in my eyes. I don't think I could have replied, had not Mr. Huntington turned to me, and said: —

"Will you, Eva?"

What I saw in his eyes made it easy for me to say "yes." It was spoken very low; but he heard it, and bent, and kissed my forehead. As he did so, a look of infinite content came to Christie's face. And thus having



THE PROMISE.

made her small will, and bequeathed me, in my loneliness, to a love she might well consider inexhaustible, she sank into a quiet sleep. Perhaps she lay thus for a quarter of an hour, and we bent over her silently, watching the sweet, pale face, as it grew whiter and more spiritual; and then she commenced talking again in a low voice, and we fancied she thought she was again at sea, for she spoke of the waves beating against the side of the ship, and how the vessel drove

on through the night; and then a troubled look swept over her face like a shadow, and she said: —

"Eva said I would get home to-morrow."

But the troubled look passed away like a shadow, and she presently looked up into her father's face, and said, smiling: —

"Oh, papa! I have got home."

And saying this, she passed into that dear home above, that is lasting and beautiful forever, and where there is no looking for any sorrowful to-morrow.

Six weeks after this night, I was sitting with Elfrida in the upper balcony, she wan and white, and dependent on me now, for her illness the night of Christie's death proved to be the commencement of a sickness that had been nearly fatal. I had intended to leave Huntington Manor immediately after Christie's funeral; but Elfrida could not endure to hear me even speak of leaving her; and when Mr. Huntington, with his pale, sorrowful face, joined his entreaties to hers, how could I refuse?

Elfrida had been reading Mrs. Browning's poems, which were her great favorites; but the book had fallen into her lap, and she sat looking at the distant mountains. What she was thinking of, as she sat there so silently, I could not tell; but I thought, as I looked up at her occasionally from my embroidery, that I had never seen her so gentle and womanly before. Finally, she spoke: —

"Eva, I want to ask you something."

"Very well," said I. "But first let me get your shawl; the air is growing chillier."

The shawl lay upon her dressing-table, and, as I bent to take it up, a sentence from an open letter that was lying there met my eye. "You should, at least, Elfrida, respect an honest love."

The writing was Mr. Huntington's. He had been in New York for the last few days, and I knew she had received a letter from him

that day. For a moment I caught at the table for support, for the room spun round with me. Like a flash came back to me a thousand little trifles, unnoticed at the time, but which I marvelled now at my blindness in not noticing.

"Eva! Are you not coming, Eva?" With the impatience of an invalid, Elfrida was calling me.

"Yes, I am coming."

I went up behind her, and folded the rich India shawl round her graceful shoulders, more carefully and tenderly than usual, I remember, for I recollect thinking, even at that moment, how I should despise myself if I should become jealous and spiteful toward her even in feeling.

Then I went and leaned against one of the pillars of the balcony; but with my face averted from hers, and so I waited for her to speak.

"Eva, I believe my sickness has taught me a great deal," she said.

"I think it does often. If there was no darkness, we couldn't see the stars."

"What is the matter, Eva? Have you taken cold? your voice doesn't sound natural."

"No, there is nothing the matter! What was it you were going to ask me?"

"Suppose a man loved you, Eva, and you had trifled with his love; set your own will against a noble, manly purpose; had been obstinate, willful — what would you do?"

"If I thought I had wronged him; if I were certain that he loved me still; that he were unhappy, and my love would make him happier, I would ——"

"You would what?" for I hesitated.

"I would find a way to tell him my mistake."

"But it is so terribly hard for a woman to go to a man, and tell him that she has discovered that she loves him better than she does her own will. How could you, Eva?"

"I would find a way," I repeated.

As I said this, I went to my room, for I felt that any further talk just then would have been impossible. To leave Huntington Manor as quickly as I could, that was my first thought. To go home, home to my mother's grave — I had no other home — and there I would try to forget him. No, I did not want to forget him, I said; I wanted his memory to go with me always; to inspire me, to make me a better girl. Not for an instant did I blame him for the words with which I had deceived myself; words he said only to soothe his dying child. And his manner to me since — it was only because Christie had loved me. I knew Elfrida would never consent to my leaving her so soon; but to-morrow she was going to spend the day with a lady friend — her first visit. I had promised to go too; but in the morning I excused myself — I was not well; and my pale cheeks bore witness to my truth.

And so I went as quietly as possible, but with Judith's wakeful eyes following me reproachfully, — went back to where my mother had died.

Mr. and Mrs. Wiggins met me with open arms and hearts. And Mr. Wiggins related a story suited to the occasion, which they called happy.

The next night, at sunset, I set out for a walk. But the earth and the sky looked dismal to me, though one was golden and the other fresh and green as June could make it. I made my walk but a short one. The gate was some distance from the house, and was separated from it by a clump of willows, and I felt so tired as I shut it, on my return, that I laid my head down upon the low gate-post, upon my clasped hands. I don't know how long I had been

there, but I am afraid my tears were falling, for I could see on the side of the hill that little white cross, and the way seemed so long between my nineteen years, and mother and home. Suddenly, a hand was laid upon my shoulder.

"Did you think you could run away from me so easily, Eva?" a voice said.

"Mr. Huntington!"

"How could you leave me so, Eva?" he said, reproachfully. "I thought you promised to love me."

There was such a loving, tender reproach in his eyes, I could hardly bear it; but I answered honestly:—

"I didn't think — I didn't know as you would care," I stammered.

"Am I then so difficult to understand? Did I not show plainly how dear you were to me?"

"Your cousin, Elfrida," I began, and then hesitated; but a glimmering of the truth seemed to dawn upon him.

"Elfrida! Why you dear little woman, she is just like a sister to me; she is engaged too, to a minister; they quarrelled, for she didn't like his profession; but she has made him some apology, which he was very glad to receive. I have been his friend throughout the whole affair, for he is a really noble fellow. I met him in New York, and wrote to her about him. I don't know whether it influenced her or not."

I knew how it had affected me, but I didn't say anything about it; indeed, I didn't care to speak at all; for the old, old story, which he seemed not to tire of telling, filled up the rosy moments. But as he went on to say how my influence had made him better, purer, I interrupted him by saying, earnestly:—

"I am not nearly so good as you think I am, Mr. Huntington; I am afraid you will find me out."

He said he couldn't possibly entertain any emotions of fear in

regard to me, because perfect love casteth out fear; and then he went on to wonder if I couldn't possibly change that "Mr. Huntington" into something shorter and easier; Claude, for instance. He must try to make me a little less afraid of him. I am afraid he kissed me then —I think he did.

The story Mr. Wiggins told me when he became aware of my engagement exceeded in length even that upon my departure. But after several hours of suspense as to how it would terminate, and doubt as to whether it would ever terminate at all, it ended happily.

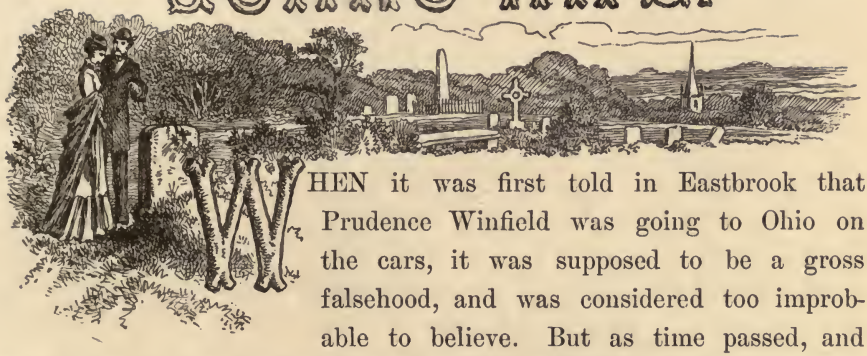
We were married in the little stone church; for I had a foolish fancy that I wanted to be married near my mother's grave. It seemed to me that, up among the angels as she was, her child's happiness must make her happier. As we stood by the little white cross, afterwards, I said: —

"It seems to me, as if mother and Christie are near to us Claude."

"They are, I fully believe it," said he, reverently. "I believe they love us still; they have only gone into a home more beautiful than ours, waiting for us."

PRUDENCE WINFIELD.

JOHN'S WIFE.



WHEN it was first told in Eastbrook that Prudence Winfield was going to Ohio on the cars, it was supposed to be a gross falsehood, and was considered too improbable to believe. But as time passed, and the wild tale was confirmed, the wonder merged into deep anxiety. How would she ever live to get there?

Old Uncle Smedley, who had peddled tinware in his day, and was considered a great traveler, with immense knowledge of the world, affirmed, solemnly, that "it was three hundred miles, if it was a step."

And at first much blame was heaped upon that old invalid, Father Winfield, for consenting to the perilous undertaking. But when it was fully understood that her only brother John was sick unto death, and felt that he must see Prudence e'er he departed, all emotions died away save anxiety as to her welfare. For Prudence was beloved in Eastbrook — so much so that, I think, if anyone had been rash enough to speak evil of Prudence Winfield, Eastbrook would have risen to a man and stoned him from their gates.

Dr. Raynor took Prudence in his light buggy to the nearest station, which was fifteen miles away — for this all occurred in a remote

era, when railroads were rarer than now. It was considered the right thing for him to do, for he and Prudence had "kept company" for ten years. Quite a long time for waiting, so our grave doctor thought. Especially did he think so on stormy evenings, seated in his library, with no society but the cold face of a Madonna looking down upon him. Eight years before, he had bought that little statuette because he thought the face was like Prue's; but how cold and impassible the marble face looked after all! If a little figure with the same pure profile, but with such wonderfully soft color in the cheeks and mouth — such large loving eyes — if that little woman, in the quiet grey dress she liked best, could only be there instead, why, what a change it would make in the great empty house, to be sure!

COLD COMFORT.

Yes, the doctor got tired of waiting, and though there was not an unmarried woman for miles about but would have been quite willing to console the handsome, manly doctor, and been mistress of his beautiful home, he loved his pure patient Prue too well to even dream of any other wife.

But Prudence wouldn't leave her father, and, with perhaps an overstrained sense of duty, would not form any other ties that would in any way interfere with her devotion to him.

Her father was an invalid, and an exceedingly difficult old gentleman to get along with — impatient, exacting, demanding all her care and all her sympathy, which she gave unstintingly; but which, nevertheless, drew so upon her vitality, that, I think, had it not been for the comfort and sympathy Dr. Raynor gave her in the calm strength of his manhood, if it had not been for the soul-rest and happiness she found in his love, I fear me, poor little Prue would hardly have endured her hard life for all these years.

What a comfort it was to Prue, to be sure, this ride through the sweet morning air with her doctor! He is saying: —

"The days will seem long without you, Prue. How long will you be gone?"

"Oh, not more than a week; father couldn't spare me possibly longer than that. I am afraid Bridget will have a hard time with him. He would never have given his consent to my going at all if it were not to see John — poor John!"

And tears filled the big, pathetic brown eyes.

Dr. Raynor was thirty-eight that very autumn, and Prudence was thirty-one; but as he saw these tears — there being no one in sight at the time — he bent down and kissed them away as tenderly as if he were just twenty-one years of age.

"Poor Prue, poor little tired woman! I wish I was going with you to take care of you."

He was silent for a minute — a silence filled with bird-song, and pleasant murmur of the south wind through the odorous branches over their heads — for they were passing through a strip of woodland that run up on either side to the highway, and then he spoke: —

"I wanted to ask you if — if it ends as you fear it will, what will be done with his wife and child? He is poor, isn't he?"

"Yes, poor John! He never could keep money. Father gave him more than half his property when he started in business, but somehow he couldn't get on."

"His wife was no help to him, as I learn — extravagant, a married flirt — a friend gave me a description of her."

"We may all have been misinformed," said gentle Prue. "I have never seen her. I don't wonder she never cared to visit us, we live in such a different style from what she has been accustomed to. But now it will be different; now, I think, she will be glad to come home with me and live. She writes me that they are poor and friendless in a strange place. I know she will let me love her now."

If Dr. Raynor thought that that would not be a very difficult task to accomplish, he may be pardoned, for he was very much in love, as his next words went to prove: —

"If she should come, Prue — if she should come to live with you — then you would be freer; then" — and the good doctor's voice fairly trembled with the intensity of his emotion — "then, Prue, will you not reward me for all my long years of waiting?"

"Maybe she wouldn't like the care of an invalid — maybe father wouldn't like her to wait on him — maybe ——"

"But you will certainly be freer, Prue. She can divide your care with you, at all events; and I will not ask you to leave your father unless you are willing to; I will even rent my place, and come and live with you, Prue — help you. Surely with her help we can take care of him, and still have some time left for each other; and

I will not let you live on in this way much longer, Prue; it is killing you."

To a woman who is constantly drawn upon for help by a weaker will — guiding, guarding, petting — there is something irresistibly fascinating in being cared for by a stronger will than her own — something exceedingly pleasant in this strong care-taking — "you shall," and "you shall not."

Nevertheless, Prue was not at rest in her mind; she saw lions by the way. And if it were possible for any one to have a quarrel with tender-hearted Prue Winfield, I fear she and her doctor would have had a lover's quarrel before they reached the sunlight of the open highway again. For, as we have said, Dr. Raynor had got tired of waiting for his life's happiness, and he told her that sometimes he was almost tempted to think that she never cared for him.

I don't think he thought this — indeed I am certain he did not; but, in his saying it, he proved that, after his ten years of patient devotion and waiting, his heart was now swept and garnished, ready for any evil spirit of jealousy to enter in and tear him.

So Dr. Raynor, after seeing Prue safely on the cars, went back to his lonely home, and Prue was borne swiftly forward toward the sick room of her brother. If Prue sorrowed over this brother, whose death-bed she soon expected to stand by, it was something as we sorrow in a dream, for he had left home when she was a child, and she had never seen him since; but letters, few and far between, kept them aware of his identity. Two or three times he had sent home for money, and Prue well remembered the sacrifices they had been obliged to make at home in order to send it. But he always sent it, for this boy John was his father's idol; or, rather, Prue sent it; for, when his father divided his property, giving John by far the greater share, the rest of his property, which was comprised in the homestead farm, was willed to Prudence.

But now John's wealth was all gone, and he was dying in a strange land. He had started to come home with his wife and child, but could get no further than this little village in Ohio, and, at his wife's instigation, he dictated a letter to his sister, asking her to come to him. His wife thought it would be much less embarrassing for her to go back with her sister-in-law, at her invitation, than to go as a stranger, unbidden; hence Prue had been sent for.

But Prue, although the cars took her, she thought, at a very swift rate, one who is swifter, whose name is Death, out-distanced her in her journeying to the bedside of her brother John. She reached the inn just in time to see his dead face in the coffin ere the grave closed over it.

John's wife met her with just the proper degree of sorrow and affliction. Such women as Helen Winfield never overdo or fall short in mourning, their grief being regulated on systematic principles intended to impress beholders. The child took Prue's loving heart by storm. It was a little boy, with a look of sadness and maturity on his small fair face unsuited to his years.

Prue soon discovered that this boy, little Johnnie, was his mother's idol, though she treated him capriciously, and really made the child unhappy. Sometimes she would indulge him to excess, pet him, humor every whim, reasonable and unreasonable; but then, if the child did not obey every word of hers, defer to every unreasonable fancy, she would burst forth in a passion of reproaches and jealous rage. It seemed as if John's wife had every other feeling in her nature in check only her love for this child, her jealousy lest he should not love her with an exclusive devotion — care for any one else but her.

Prue loved the quiet, unhappy little fellow from the very first moment she looked on him sitting with swollen eyes at the foot of his father's coffin. The affection Johnnie had felt for his father

could be traced in every feature of his pale little face. And, after Prue knew his mother better, she could well imagine how that love had been made a torture to the sensitive child.

Three days later found Prudence and John's wife at Eastbrook. John's wife made herself exceedingly useful. Daughters-in-law might well have taken pattern by John's wife in devotion to aged fathers in-law. In fact, before they had been home a month, Prue found her time almost entirely at her own disposal. Her father seemed to have no need of her, so entirely had John's wife taken her place in his mind, weakened by age and suffering. The devotion of a life time was forgotten in the blandishments and flatteries of this new daughter.

JOHN'S WIFE.

Prue's hands were at ease, but her heart ached. She had cared for her father so long that he seemed to her more like a child than

a parent. She felt for him that deeper love that people say parents always feel for the most helpless of the children, the one that calls for the most care. And before this new daughter came Prue had been the very apple of her father's eye, and the knowledge of his love for her had made his unreasonableness and exactions endurable.

It would seem almost impossible that a father could be influenced against such a daughter as Prue; but John's wife was a very clever woman — a splendid diplomatist she would have made had fate given nations into her care instead of the happiness of poor Prue Winfield.

I don't think it added much to her unhappiness when at the end of four months a new will was made, giving the property that had been willed to Prue to John's boy. For she was one of the fond, foolish ones of the earth whose dearest wealth consists not in houses and lands. Prue was very unselfish, and she loved the little fellow.

But, poor Prue, she had fallen upon hard ways, for now, of all times, when she needed some love to turn to in her heart-loneliness and pain — that affection that had grown to be the best part of her life seemed to fail her. Dr. Raynor grew cool, and his visits less and less frequent. He did, indeed, visit her father regularly, and strove with all his skill to make the old man's last hours more comfortable, for he was failing fast. But he seemed to avoid Prue, and, as John's wife seemed to wish to monopolize his society when he called, Prue shrank from meeting him, and silently, strongly, day by day, an intangible but mighty barrier rose between them.

Johnnie's loyal, childish fingers would, if it had been in his power, smoothed all the pain and anguish from the heart of dear Aunt Prue. For he soon transferred to this unselfish, patient aunt the love he had given his father. I think that John's wife, in the higher stakes she was playing for, was unmindful how her idol's heart was turning to that of Prue, or her jealousy would have broken forth in the old time storms that Johnnie remembered so well, when

he had manifested his preference for his weak, good-natured father. But Johnnie's love could not fill poor Prue's heart. The days were very long — long as those days only can be which are endured in the constant anguish of patience.

The last day of September came, and the earth all flamed out in beauty, gorgeous, glowing. But to poor Prue it was only the hectic flush that betokens that sweet nature was dying. Everything seemed dying — fading away, to poor Prue Winfield — life, love, happiness. Her father had failed very rapidly for the last few days. Just at sundown she went into his room; he was asleep, but as she bent over him, to draw the bed-quilt more carefully about him, he opened his eyes and looked up into her face earnestly, wistfully.

"Shall I call John's wife?" asked Prue, patiently.

"No, no! Prue, good girl, Mary's girl, you stay with me, I want you."

He closed his eyes again, and Prue sat by him silently, till the light all faded from the room, and she heard, through the open window, the loaded wains and the tired laborers wending homeward in the twilight to the welcome repose of the night, and in that quiet hour Father Winfield, too, rested from all his labors.

It was but a month after her father's death, but already had John's wife shown to Prudence that she expected her to find a new home — not by words, but by the subtler language of looks, actions.

Prue had an aunt in New Hampshire; true, she had never seen her, but she was a widow, and Prue thought the lonely woman might welcome her, for her mother's sake, for a few weeks until she could look around and see what she was to do in the future.

The winter was setting in early, and the first day of November was dreary enough. The dead leaves lay in heaps under the cold gray sky. Prue thought the day was like her life, gray and bare, cold and dreary. Just before dark she set out to visit her father's grave.

Johnnie had not been very well that day, and had gone to bed before sundown, so she was alone. Just before she reached the churchyard gate she met Dr. Raynor. It was the first time she had seen him since the day of the funeral, and Prue looking up for the moment was startled to see the change in his face since she had seen him. He looked sick and weary. But he bowed coldly enough to her, and passed by without a word.

I think, if Prue had told the truth, she would have said, if there was anything on earth she envied and coveted, it was the quiet repose of the sleeper below, as she stood there by that grave, with the tears falling fast over her white face.

How long she stood there she did not know, for grief as well as happiness takes no note of the passage of time. But she was aroused at last by a hand laid upon her arm.

"Prue! Miss Winfield! you ought not to be sitting here in the cold and damp."

She looked up for a moment with her pathetic, startled eyes, and then she bowed her face again in her hands.

"You will listen to me as a doctor, Prue, though I have lost every other claim upon your attention. I thought I would never intrude upon you in any way again. But your white face to-night frightened me. You are sick, and you must not sit here in the cold any longer."

Ah! how sweet to poor, lonely Prue was the old authoritative caretaking, "You must not." Prue was not one of the strong-minded, and liked to be ordered about by those she loved. So she rose and drew her shawl about her, and turned to leave the grave. But she had not taken a step before she felt a cold hand upon her arm.

"Prue! Prue! I never meant to speak to you to reproach you for the ruin of my happiness. But I can't let you go without one farewell word — one ——"

"The ruin of your happiness," cried poor Prue, looking up into his white face. "Are you, too, unhappy through my fault? I wish I were dead," she burst forth, with quivering lips, "so I could trouble no one any more!"

"Do you know that I have wished that, too, Prue — wished that you had died when I thought you were my own, so I could call you mine in death, weep over your grave, know that I could claim you in that other home? But to think you could deceive me so, trifle with my love — that you never loved me!"

"Never loved you!" cried Prue. "Who told you that?"

"John's wife — but I never would have believed it if your cold manner hadn't confirmed it. That made me believe it. But, oh, Prue, for the sake of my faith in humanity, tell me I was wrong — that you did once, long ago — love me!"

She raised her pure eyes to his face, and said, with her old, sweet gravity: —

"I have always loved you."

What took place next, what words were said, are not for us to listen to; but a half-hour later they were sitting there still, for the doctor had unaccountably gotten over his fear of evening damps. Perhaps he thought the strong arm about the little figure could ward off even as intangible enemies as mists and miasma! At all events, there they were sitting — his arm around her, both of her small hands in his one strong hand; his face bent down near to the pretty, patient one, pale now no longer; and he was talking to her in the old way, speaking sweet words, doubly tender now through pity and sympathy — when they were both startled by a little, soft, piping, childish voice close beside them: —

"Aunt Prue, I've tummed to find you — Johnnie was tired, and wanted you."

"Johnnie! — you here at this hour?"

"Yes; you know we've tummed here mos' every day. I knew you was here, and I wanted you — Johnnie was tired."

Johnnie was in his bare feet and night-gown; but, with childish precaution against taking cold, he had wrapped a great crimson shawl of his mother's about him, which trailed on the ground behind him like a royal mantle.

The doctor took the little fellow in his arms, and carried him up

"I'VE TUMMED TO FIND YOU."

to the old farm-house. But Aunt Prue must hold one of the hot, baby hands all the way; for "Johnnie was tired, and wanted Aunt Prue." And through the days to come this was the great want of the little invalid; for Johnnie's illness proved to be the scarlet-fever, and his exposure to the night air had not helped him. But still he was not considered

dangerous; and Prue couldn't watch over him as she wanted to, his mother so jealously monopolized all the care of him. The face of John's wife had not been pleasant to look upon since that evening when she saw the reconciled lovers come in bearing her little runaway.

A week after this was Prue's wedding-day; for the doctor would not brook another instant's delay, and they had been married very quietly at the little village church. That night all the doctor's dreamings had come true; for there Prue sat, by his side, in the library, pleasant now, and bright as no other room ever was or ever could be — so Dr. Raynor knew. Prue had not wanted to take the stereotyped wedding journey, and the doctor willingly yielded to her wishes, grudging as he did every moment of her time that was not exclusively his own. As they sat there in that bright room, love-glorified, a message came to Dr. Raynor to come quickly to the farm-house, for Johnnie was worse.

The anger and envy and disappointment of John's wife had yielded to her anxiety, for Dr. Raynor was the most skillful physician in the vicinity.

In their great happiness they could both afford to forgive her for all the bitterness and anguish she had caused them, and in a few minutes Dr. Raynor and Prue were by his side. Johnnie lay in his mother's arms, pale and still. The doctor had only to glance at him, when Prue knew by his face the truth — Johnnie was dying. John's wife had stolen her father's affections, stolen her rightful inheritance, and well-nigh broken Prue's heart by her efforts at winning her lover's heart. But still Prue could feel nothing but pity and compassion for her when the truth was broken to her that her idol was dying.

He lived till the next night, when, just at sunset, he aroused out of the stupor in which he had lain for the past two days, andlooked around him with wistful eyes. His mother bent overt he little crib: —

"Johnnie, do you know me? Speak to me, Johnnie, once more — tell mamma you love her."

He looked up into her face, said, "Mamma," and then he looked around the room till his eyes rested on Prue, who was weeping silently, with her face on her husband's shoulder: —

"Aunt Prue, take Johnnie — Johnnie is tired."

Prue gave one deprecating glance at the jealous rage that even in that moment flamed up in the mother's face to see another preferred to herself, and then Prue bent over him. But ere she could take the little head upon her breast it was lying upon a gentler bosom than even gentle Aunt Prue's. And doctor Raynor drew his arm around his wife, and whispered: —

"Forbid them not to go to Him. Don't cry so, darling — little Johnnie will never be tired again."

PET AND "MIT PADIE."

PLAIN MISS PAGE.

IN the spring of 1869 a merchant, who had been exceedingly wealthy, failed in business, owing to the rascality of his partner; and, instead of endeavoring to keep up appearances in the city, he very wisely collected together what fragments of his large fortune remained after his debts were paid, and removed to a flourishing inland village. After purchasing a small cottage on the outskirts of the town, he had enough left to commence business again in a small way. And so, bravely and patiently, the grey-headed gentleman commenced again at the foot of the ladder, where he had been thirty years before. The bravery and uncomplaining perseverance of the old gentleman "was a sight worth seeing, and a lesson to younger men"—so Judge Harris said; and, as he was the great man of Harrisville, he ought to know. He owned half the town, and lived in a great mansion that was the pride and delight of Harrisville—for young Judge Harris, unlike some rich men, was beloved and respected by his fellow-townsmen. The house was closed now, and in the care of servants; for the judge had gone to Cuba with his young wife, in the hope that a balmy climate would give her back the health she had lost.

Mr. Page—for this was the merchant's name—was a widower,

with two daughters, one of whom was so beautiful that she had been known in society as the "handsome Miss Page," her younger sister being sometimes called, by strangers, the "plain Miss Page." Mr. Page, being old-fashioned in some of his ideas, and a believer in the old adage, "Handsome is that handsome does," would have resented the idea of his Mary being plain. And, in fact, had it not been for the wonderful beauty of her sister, no one would have thought of calling Mary Page plain; for there was a wonderfully sweet expression to her brown eyes and her child-like, innocent mouth. But Pauline Page was a beauty. Her face was classic. Her admirers often thought how beautiful her face would look carved in marble—what an ornament it would be for some public park, or, as a painting, to hang in a public art-gallery, what a crowd it would attract! I will wager, no such idea ever crossed any one's mind in connection with sweet Mary Page. If any one dreamed of her, it would be as of a cheerful household fairy, sitting behind a coffee-urn in a pleasant breakfast-room, or singing some sweet song in the twilight, with a child's face on her bosom. They would imagine her as gentle, cheerful, and hopeful always, which would be imagining her in her true character. And Pauline, it was only natural to picture her as receiving admiration; for ever since strangers stopped her nurse on the street to admire her in long clothes, she had lived upon the food of admiration; and it had proven extremely nourishing to her in advancing the growth of sundry qualities in her nature, which a perusal of this humble tale will show.

How did these young ladies relish the change from a brown-stone palace in the city and a cottage at Newport, with a retinue of servants to wait upon them, to a life in this quiet village, and the necessity of buttoning their own shoes and brushing their own hair, to say nothing of assisting their one servant in the work of the household? I think I will take the liberty of copying one or two letters from Pauline Page to her "bosom friend," as the surest way of discovering her feeling upon

this subject and divers others; for it is my belief that a letter written in the unreserve of intimacy reveals one's soul better than words can:

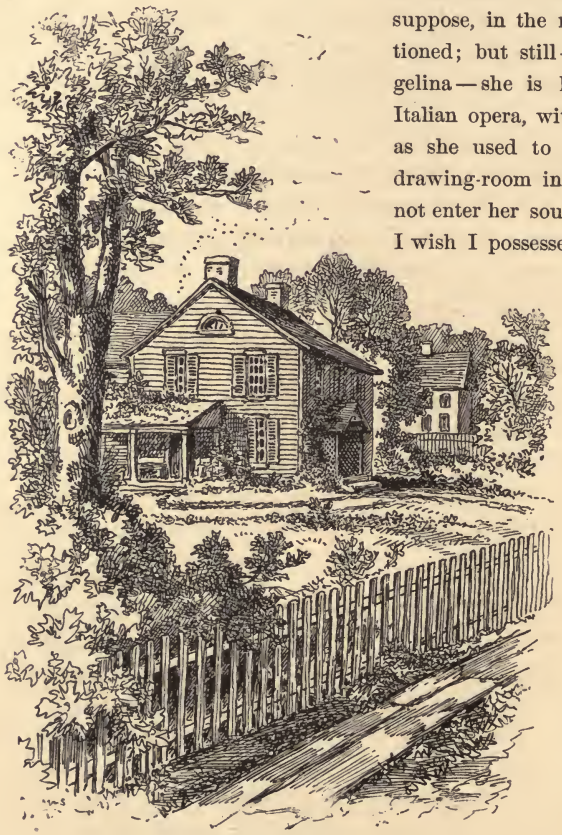
HARRISVILLE,
June, 1869.

"DEAREST ANGELINA: It is nearing sunset, friend of my soul; but I feel that I must pour out the feelings of my burdened heart to you, my lovely bosom friend, my spirit's true mate. How sweet is such communing between kindred souls! Mary just entered my room, and in the cold practicalness of her coarser nature, requested me to 'go out with her and pick the garden-raspberries.' She said that to-morrow was ironing and baking day, and Bridget wouldn't get any time to pick them, and they were spoiling upon the vines, and they would be unfit to can if they were not picked at once.

"That is just like Mary — to come here into my room, where I was sitting by the open window, trying to forget my despair and sorrow in contemplation of the glory of the sunset-hour and soul-communion with

PAULINE.

you, dearest, and disturb me, and bring me back again to the dreary treadmill of actual life, with her cold calculation — her worldly talk about 'canning raspberries.' Of course I refused her request, firmly and decidedly: but it pains me, darling, to think there is so little soul-communion and heart-acquaintance between us when we are so utterly dependent now upon each other's society. I hear her now in the garden, at the rear of the house. She is engaged, I suppose, in the menial employment she mentioned; but still — if you can believe it, Angelina — she is humming a fragment of an Italian opera, with apparently as light a heart as she used to warble it in our magnificent drawing-room in the city. Ah! the iron does not enter her soul as it does mine. Sometimes I wish I possessed her cold, heartless, indifferent nature. For, dearest one, the blow has fallen — father is ruined. We have left our brown-stone palace in Fifth Avenue, and have retired to this hovel in the wilderness.



THE HOVEL.

"The latter part of the foregoing sentence, love, was the imagery of a despairing soul. The hovel is, literally, a two-story white cottage, and the wilderness is a village in the interior of the state. Father has entered into business here, in a very small way, and seems more like himself than he did before our removal here. Mary is always cheerful, and even mirthful, in his presence. But my soul is made of far finer materials. Not a smile has father seen upon my face since the day he came in and said, 'Girls, I am ruined!'

"I cannot forget that it lay in father's power to make his failure result even advan-

tageously to himself, had it not been for his and Mary's overstrained ideas of honor and honesty. No one — not even the most heartless enemy I possess — could accuse me of a lack of religion. You recollect, love, how deeply I was affected the day I was confirmed. How plainly I recollect how chastely elegant was the new silk dress I wore upon that occasion. And you well know, love, how steadily and constantly I attended church, upon pleasant days, when one could go without endangering their best apparel. No one can accuse me of a lack of religion; but I think — and I told them so, plainly — that such consciences as father and Mary possess are extremely inconvenient. I will use no harsher term; for I cannot forget, even after all that has passed, that they are my father and sister still.

"Since our arrival here I have remained in my room almost constantly; and Mary — who, I confess, has some good ordinary household qualities — has made it the pleasantest room in the house, with the exception of father's. She insisted on giving him the best and airiest chamber in the house. And she really seems to take as much delight in ornamenting these common rooms with fresh flowers, and in playing to father in the evening on the little parlor-organ, as she used to in gathering the rare flowers in our conservatory, or playing on our grand piano — which, you know, love, cost fifteen hundred dollars in Paris.

"But why recall these holy and cherished joys of the past? It is all past. The splendor vanished like a sacred dream, too sweet to stay. And the desert pathway of life stretches before the feet of your Pauline.

"The sun hath sunk behind the dreary horizon, and I must close this lengthy epistle, by subscribing myself your ever-loving, but despairing, "PAULINE."

"HARRISBURG, July, 1869.

"O MY DEAREST ANGELINA: I have just returned from a funeral. Such a touching scene! My sensitive heart was so affected by it, that I should have shed tears copiously had I not unfortunately gone to the church unprovided with any handkerchief only my best point lace, which I had newly done up, and which I fear will not come safely through another washing. But my tears, if I did not allow them to overflow my eyelids, fell sorrowfully upon my heart, as I saw that noble mourner, Judge Harris, with his cherub little one, stand by the grave of her young mother.

"As they went to lower the coffin in the ground, the little cherub-daughter, aged about four, who had evidently been informed that her mother was going to some beautiful place, sprang forward and told them, in the broken language of artless childhood, 'that they should not put her pretty mamma in the ground.' And then she turned and threw herself into her father's arms, and cried to him to stop them, to 'not let them put her mamma down in the ground.'

"Judge Harris's noble and beautiful countenance was pale as the snowy flowers that rested on the coffin-lid, as he took her up in his arms, and laid his cheek down upon hers, trying to soothe her. Ah! at this moment how earnestly I regretted that I had taken a handkerchief unsuitable for this sorrowful and deeply-touching occasion.

THE BURIAL.

"Mary, with her usual reckless and selfish disregard for consequences, clung to my arm, and, hiding her face on my shoulder, sobbed out, 'Oh, the poor little darling!' I freed myself from contact with her wet face as speedily as possible, but not soon enough to prevent disastrous consequences; and there is a spot on the shoulder of my silver poplin as large as a tea-cup. But Mary has promised to exchange dresses with me, and, as hers has not been worn scarcely any, and is of nicer material than mine ever was, I feel measurably consoled for the needless accident.

"Had not my attention been entirely engrossed, dearest Angelina, by that beautiful mourner—he is the handsomest man I ever saw, love, and as rich as a Jew — I should have been very much interested in the young clergyman, he repeated the solemn service so impressively.

"How I love our Mother Church, Angelina! How I admire its holy teachings!

What can be more sweet and impressive than the burial service, as it was read over that young wife, unless indeed, it is the service of marriage? There is something so sweet and heavenly in it, where it says, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow.'

"What can be more affecting and divine than that? These words came into my mind involuntarily, even as I stood there and looked at the bowed head of that lovely and wealthy widower. As I said, if I had not been so much engrossed by these religious reflections, and overcome by the contemplations of manly sorrow, I should have been most favorably impressed by the young clergyman; and, darling, though perhaps it is improper to speak of it, I caught his eye fastened upon my face several times. And, to you I may say it, it seemed to read my very soul.

"Clergymen have such a penetrating way of looking at one, especially if they are young and unmarried, and the lady is beautiful. Yes, to you, to whom I confide all the treasured secrets of my heart, I would not attempt to deny that I cannot fail to be aware that my face possesses attractions, and that I have received the designation of the 'handsome Miss Page.'

"One more heart-trial I must reveal to you, dearest consoler, and then I must pause, for I must not weary my Angelina. Mary has opened a school for children. Several weeks ago, in spite of all my earnest objections, my

prayers for her to save our respectability, and desist from her low-bred scheme, that self-willed girl actually opened a school. She said 'she would not let father toil alone. We were young, and we ought to help him.'

"I tried reasoning at first. I said to her as calmly as I could, while my blood was boiling with indignation at her:

"'That, as society was organized at present, it was men's duty to toil and support whatever number of helpless women Providence had placed under their guardianship.'

"But she still remained obdurate; and then I wept as I besought her to abandon her disgraceful plan. And when you recollect, dear, how ruinous weeping always was to my complexion, you will realize how deeply I felt this last disgrace that has overshadowed us.

"But, adieu, sweet soul. I must not shadow your sunny pathway — is it as warm, dear, at Long Branch this season as it was in the long ago? — by the dark clouds that enwrap Pauline. Think of me sometimes, sweet one, as you stand by the wild waterside, listening to its solemn voice, and the low sweet words of your admirers, or as you whirl through the waltz mazes, guided and assisted by a manly arm — oh! in those holy hours, lost to me forevermore — give one thought to your afflicted, but ever-loving,

"PAULINE."

"HARRISVILLE, June, 1871.

"MY DEAREST SOUL: If I have not written to my sweet girl for four long weeks, it is not forgetfulness, but business, that has caused the dreary hiatus. My hands and mind have been burdened, but, my soul, my heart hath been with thee incessantly.

"Is it not strange, dear, and beautiful to realize, how, out of what we consider our greatest afflictions, good may arise? You will, of course, recollect Mary's children's school, which she started nearly two years ago, and which was such a trial to my proud, sensitive nature. Well, dearest, it would seem that Providence, realizing and pitying my mortification in that direction, alleviated my soul's pangs by instigating Mr. Harris to bring his little daughter here to school.

"You know I wrote you that he had been abroad with his child and her nurse ever since his wife's death; but he returned a few weeks since, and brought his little daughter here.

"He said that he thought at first he would obtain a governess for her, but had decided that being with other children would be better for her than to be alone with grown people in that great lonesome house.

"Oh, dearest, would I could transcribe on this cold paper the interesting sigh he gave, involuntarily, as he mentioned the loneliness of his house!

"Angelina, he is perfectly beautiful! He has the most splendid large, dark eyes, with long lashes, and such a sweet, winning smile, and real diamond cuff-buttons — the coldest critic would recognize those at a glance — such elegant wavy brown hair, such a broad, white forehead — such perfectly-shaped hands. His little daughter, Pet — her name is, in reality, Marcia, but he always calls her Pet — she clung to one of those white, aristocratic, elegantly-shaped hands all the time during our first interview. They showed to good advantage then; but to see them to noblest advantage you should behold them in their perfectly-fitting kids, driving his noble grey horses, attached to a light buggy. He has an elegant carriage and coachman, of course. But he seems fond of driving himself. When he rides in his carriage Pet is always with him.

"In waking visions it may be that I have seen a beautiful lady opposite him, leaning back against the luxurious satin cushions, attired in the latest style.

"But no more of this. There are some thoughts too sacred, too holy to reveal even to thee, twin soul of mine.

"Perhaps I mentioned that I received them alone. Mary is always busy. It is a constitutional weakness of hers, that she inherited from father. (I received my sensitive feelings and my refined spiritual nature from my mother, who was a genteel, fashionable woman, in every sense of the word.) As I said, Mary was busy; and as I am always anxious to do my part in life, and was attired becomingly in a pale blue morning dress, I offered to receive them alone. And since then — for you, who know me so well, know how earnestly I follow the path of duty — I have always received him whenever he has called, for I will not disturb Mary by calling her from her labors, in which she takes such delight.

"Either Mr. Harris or a servant brings little Pet every morning and comes for her at night. Last night she insisted upon staying all night, and, as her father was absent upon business and she absolutely refused to go home, the servant was obliged to leave her.

"Mr. Harris, who returned late at night, called this morning and apologized for the trouble she made me by staying. Of course, I told him, instead of a trouble, it was a great delight to have the dear, sweet little creature with me. But, to tell the plain truth, love, I never see any of the children, not even little Pet, only when her father is with her. I am, constitutionally, averse to children. I inherited it from my lady-like mother, who, I am told, left me entirely to the care of nurses. Father, I am told, for some reason, when Mary was born, declared he would take care of her himself, and he kept her with him almost constantly. I have thought sometimes that being so constantly with father is what makes her so different from me — so much less spiritual, so much less finely organized.

"As I said, love, I am not fond of children. My nerves are too sympathetic, my

nature is too delicately attuned to endure the care that childhood inevitably causes. In case of any children coming under my permanent care, either my own or by marriage, I should employ nurses and governesses to relieve me of all attendance upon them.

"Mary being made of coarser material, it seems an actual delight to her to have them hanging about her. Little Pet would insist upon sleeping with her last night. And after they retired to Mary's room, the thought occurred to me whether it would not be advisable, under certain circumstances, to secure Mary as a nursery governess. What those certain circumstances are, love, I cannot at present reveal, as it would be improper to refer, even to you, to events that may take place in the future. But you do not blame me, dear, do you, for thus generously thinking of the welfare of others in case great wealth should come to me?

"Mary is eminently fitted by nature for the care of children, and, by making her a nursery governess, it would be to give her employment singularly congenial to her. There is, dearest, something poetical and lovely in the innocent, unaffected caresses and endearments of childhood. But I never encourage any advances from them, they are so crushing to collars and ruffles. And then there is usually an odor of bread and butter about them that, to one of so spiritual a temperament as I possess, is inexpressibly revolting. Bread and butter, dearest, is so, of the earth, earthy. I cannot write more, love, now, for the shades of night are fast enveloping the sleeping earth. Adieu, dearest love, adieu. Your own

"PAULINE."

I think I will not transcribe any more of Pauline's letters; but many of like import did she write to her "spirit's mate" during the early summer of 1871. For this labor, together with frizzing and curling her hair, admiring herself in the largest mirror in the house, which was in her room, making as elaborate toilets as she could with her own and her sister's wardrobe, constituted her only employment — or, we are wrong, one other employment she had, to which she gave most thought and care — the entertaining of Mr. Harris when he called.

And she made many opportunities of meeting him on the street, at church, at the post-office, at the houses of mutual friends.

Mr. Harris was courteous to her, as to all other women; in fact, perhaps, he evinced a little partiality for the society of Pauline. If so, it was not singular, for her beauty was certainly something remarkable.

But in all this time Mr. Harris had not met the "plain Miss Page." Pet, who was eloquent in her praise, had awakened in her father's mind a desire to behold the one who had been so kind to his child. But it seemed exceedingly difficult of accomplishment.

Mr. Page attended church at a little village near by, whose clergyman had been an old college friend, and Mary always accompanied him. She did not go into society at all, as her days were devoted to her school, and her evenings to her father; and when Mr. Harris called there, Pauline was too conscientious, too firm a follower of duty, to call Mary from her labors.

There was a balloon ascension at the Harrisville Fair Grounds, and all the village turned out, *en masse*, to witness it.

Pauline was there, and Mary; for, of course, the idea of school duties upon that great day was too absurd for the children to entertain for a moment. But I am afraid Mary was not having a very brilliant time. Pauline was, for some reason, out of temper; her stock of temper was always very low, but to-day she snubbed Mary unmercifully, and the toadies of village girls, who made the fashionable, self-asserting Pauline their model, and their shallow-pated beaux followed, as in duty bound, her example. She had just made the suggestion to Pauline, that she should go home, for she was tired.

Pauline told her with exceeding earnestness, "not to be an idiot."

"But I don't like to stay any longer, Pauline. It is really tiresome to me."

"Well, I wish you to stay. How it would look for you to go home this time of day, just as if you had to work so hard you couldn't afford to spend an hour or two. I declare, it seems as if you can't endure to see me having a minute's pleasure or recreation without your wishing to spoil it in some way. It is perfectly astonishing, as I wrote to Angelina yesterday, how selfish some people can be!"

Just at that moment an elegant carriage drove slowly a little past them, and stopped. As the coachman reined up the horses in a good position to command a view of the ascension, a little sweet voice called out:

"Mit Padie, Mit Padie, tum here, and see my papa!"

Mr. Harris smiled a little, as he followed Pet's eager look, and met the glance of a confused, but, he thought, a very sweet-looking face. And he evidently made some effort to restrain Pet's ardor; but in vain, for she cried, loudly:

"I want my pitty Mit Padie, papa." She leaned her little golden head out of the window, and cried, "Mit Padie, Mit Padie!"

One of the very shallowest-brained of the village girls said to Pauline, in a shrill voice, broken by the inevitable giggle, that "Mr. Harris had learned little Pet her lesson well."

With a satisfied and conscious look, Pauline gently chided her for her speech, and then she advanced to the carriage window.

"Dear little cherub, how loving and impulsive she is! Then you are glad to see me, darling?"

But Pet did not even deign her a glance. Her impatient eyes sought the quiet little figure behind Pauline, and almost hidden by her voluminous drapery.

"I want *my* Mit Padie."

And, quick as a flash of light, Pet opened the carriage door, and, running up to Mary, clasped her hands round her knees, and looking up in her face, with all her golden hair streaming back from it, she exclaimed:

"We dot 'oo now, Mit Padie; 'oo tant dit away adin."

Mr. Harris had followed Pet from the carriage; and as Mary lifted her face from Pet's—for she couldn't help kissing the sweet little eager, upturned face the very first thing—her sister introduced her to him.

And then followed such earnest prayers, in very broken language, for "*her* Mit Padie to wide," that Pauline and Mary could do no less than accept Mr. Harris's invitation to ride about the grounds.

Once seated in the carriage, Pet looked at the captive Mary with abundant content, and said:

"See's my pitty Mit Padie. I sep with her, I did, wite in a bed."

She said this with a solemn air, as if sleeping in a bed were an incredible feat, but still she and "her Mit Padie" had accomplished it. And then other reminiscences of that notable visit occurred to her.

"I said my payers, I did, to my Mit Padie 'fore me went to seep. I say, 'Mit Padie, I want to say my payers to 'oo des I did to my mamma.' See say, ''Oo sall, dear, 'oo want to.' So I kneeled wite down, 'n see put her hand on my head des my mamma did. I love my Mit Padie, I do."

All that afternoon Pet clung to "her Mit Padie." She wouldn't suffer her to leave her; and after the festivities were over the dignified coachman was directed to drive the elegant carriage to the humble residence of Mr. Page. And his master, not nearly so exclusive and haughty as he, assisted therefrom the "plain Miss Page and her handsome sister."

After this eventful day, Mr. Harris called oftener at Mr. Page's, and invariably asked for Miss Mary. But she was always invisible. Whether she received private admonitions to this effect from her sister has not been proven. But she was always invisible. Pauline was visible.

But it chanced at about this time Pet was taken sick, and nothing would content her but "her Mit Padie."

And so Mr. Harris sent the carriage for her. It returned bearing Miss Pauline. "Mary was busy, so she had come in her place."

Pet refused to so much as speak to her, but continued to cry "for *her* pitty Mit Padie," until Mr. Harris volunteered to go for her.

Mary, who had heard nothing of Pet's sickness, was working by the gate amongst her flowers. She drew off her gardening gloves, and in her garden hat, pink lawn dress, and white apron, professed herself ready to go with him. And in half an hour after, Pet, in abundant content, went to sleep in her arms.

They made a pretty picture — a sweet, tender, household picture — that haunted Mr. Harris on his lonely homeward drive, for he insisted on taking her home himself.

Pet's sickness proved rather serious, and Mary, in spite of all sisterly admonitions of the exceeding impropriety of the act, went to see her as often as Mr. Harris came for her, and that was quite frequent. She carried light and sunshine and happiness into the sick room, and she carried out of it a heart she had won unwittingly.

Whether she left her own heart in the great house, which, although it was so filled with rare treasures, contained nothing so true and priceless, it was difficult to judge, for Mary was very quiet, and had no bosom friend, except her father.

But one lovely twilight, in October, Mr. Harris waylaid her in a remote garden path, into which she had turned at his approach.

She and Pet had been laughing and pelting each other with the crimson and golden autumn leaves, among which Pet was playing now, at a little distance.

Mary was vanishing in the direction of the house, as we said; but with dire intent Mr. Harris stopped her.

"I wish I were as fortunate as Pet, Miss Page."

"Why so?" said Mary, still evincing a strong disposition to flee toward the house, Pauline's face looking out of the parlor window seeming to encourage her in this disposition.

"Because you talk with Pet. You never avoid her. You seem to love her."

As many another woman has done before, and will probably con-

tinue to do in time to come, Mary tried to hide her confusion, her happy heart-beats, by light, laughing words. And so he went on:

"You don't run away from *her* love," he said.

"Well, you know I am *her* 'Mit Padie.'"

"Well, wont you be *mine?*"

Her precise answer hath not been recorded; but it is supposed to have been encouraging, for just at that minute Pet, looking up, saw her papa kiss "her Mit Padie." The shrubbery hid them from Pauline; but such news cannot be hidden long.

THE PROPOSAL.

Note-paper could not be obtained for a week after at Harrisville, the "handsome Miss Page" having drained the market.

It was reported that one match was broken up in consequence of the frenzied lover being obliged to write to his *fiancée* upon foolscap. But, be that as it may, Pauline's bosom friend, Angelina, received quires of anguish, of lamentations over the selfishness of all beings, sisters especially, of blasted hopes, and weariness of the desert world.

Geology hath its periods; so does the human heart. After this era — which might be termed a conglomerate of sandstone and black ink — her life advanced into a more green and gracious period. She attended church with great regularity, and the young clergyman, "with penetrating eyes," became a frequent guest of hers.

Who can tell what the discipline of love and poverty may effect, even in such a nature as hers?

THE MEETING.

Miss Higgins's Man.

FOR thirty years Miss Higgins had looked under her bed every night, and had never found a man there yet; still she looked. Whether it was fear that impelled that deathless research, or a fatality that was beckoning her to her fate, I knew not. It would seem, however, to be the former, for she had often been heard to observe, "that, of all the abominations on earth, a man was the most abominable."

Indeed, at the informal tea-drinkings of the allied forces of Chesterville, the three Misses Wheeler and the two Misses Jones, she had often excelled them all in the withering tone with which she would repeat, "Man! man!" and no one could breathe greater defiance at this foeman than she. It was at one of these tea-parties that they had entered into a solemn compact that, in the event of women's rights giving either of these allies sovereign power over the nation, an Eastern law was to be by them imported and improved, and husbands burned with the dead bodies of their wives.

As Eunice Higgins well remarked, "That would put an end to wid-

owers pretty lived." And with this remark the Hyson flowed and the wassail went on, with such spirit that Aurelia Wilder, the most radical, added another clause: "That the children of widowers should be throwed in too, and not be a botherin' other women." This was also well received.

Now if any one thinks that Miss Eunice Higgins was a woman devoid of virtues and womanly graces, I pity them, they are so utterly mistaken. She had assisted a drunken father through the world till he made his exit, sustained and supported a feeble mother and three or four children, older but more helpless than she, till the mother went home to her reward, and the children had found flourishing homes for themselves, with the exception of the eldest son, who had followed his father's footsteps, literally. Indeed, when one contemplates the specimens of manhood she had been most familiar with, her aversion to the sex does not seem so wonderful. She was now shrewd-eyed, but good and kindly-looking. No home was brighter than hers. No farm better managed.

The night on which commences my humble history, Miss Higgins went to her room in unusual good humor. She had had a tea-party. The allies had all been present, and had admitted unanimously that such fragrant tea, such snowy biscuits and honey, such golden butter, such cakes and sweetmeats had not been partaken of that season. The scene of her benign victory rose before her as she took off the little switch of hair at the backside of her head, and pensively rolled it up ere she put it in the top bureau drawer.

She saw again the sinking sun shining in through her house plants in the window, upon the crimson drugget of the dining-room, the snowy tea-table, with its silver and pink-sprigged china, the admiring faces of her friends as they partook of her delicious food. But one memory disquieted her: She almost mistrusted her lemon extract was losing its strength; the frosting on the fruit cake didn't seem to be flavored quite

high enough. But this haunting memory was softened by the thought that she could get a new bottle to-morrow.

By this time she was arrayed in her long white night-dress and night-cap. She folded up every article of clothing, and laid it down at right-angles, she locked up her breast-pin, and then, impelled by fate, she calmly advanced to the side of the bed, and raised the snowy counterpane, gave one shriek, and fell backward on the carpet, striking her head as she did so, on a chair-rocker. *There was her man under the bed.*

"o - - - - - h!"

Miss Higgins had often fancied how she would awe such a robber, such a burglar, with her fearless and searching glances; how she would defend her property with her life. Let us not be too hard with her. She is not the only one of us who has found that it is more easy to dream of great achievements than to accomplish them. She is not the only one who, at the first shock, has shrieked and tumbled down before adverse fate.

But Eunice Higgins was not one to wither away before a calamity. Not long did she lie there; but, as short a time as it was, when she lifted her head her man confronted her. He was a very small man, indeed, not more than seven years old, and small at that; very good-looking and well clothed, although exceedingly dishevelled and uncomfortable in appearance.

"How came you here under my bed?"

This was the first question; but it was repeated before he answered, with drooping head and glances:

"I've runned away."

"Run away from where?"

"From our folks's house."

"Who is your folks?"

"Father."

Here the dialogue terminated suddenly, Eunice Higgins becoming suddenly conscious that a night-gown and night-cap were not the proper raiment in which to entertain even so small a man Out in the pleasant sitting-room, beneath the warm light of kerosene gleaming through rose-geraniums and the keener light of Eunice Higgins's eyes, the inquisition was continued, from which these facts were gleaned: that the boy, Johnny Dale, had been so tried with his father, because he wouldn't let him go to a circus, that he had run away. It was early in the morning, he said, and he had got a ride with a teamster, and had rode with him till afternoon; so he must have come some distance. After the teamster stopped he had walked on; and, coming to her door in the twilight, he had thought he would ask for some supper. But there was no one in. Miss Higgins had gone "a piece" with her visitors, leaving the tea-table standing there, laden with good things. He had helped himself generously, and then, as he heard her step suddenly outside, guilt, which makes cowards of us all, drove him into the bedroom, and, as the step came nearer and nearer, under the bed. His

unusual fatigue had overpowered him, and he had fallen asleep, and was awakened only by her scream as she discovered him.

Miss Higgins had found the man she had been looking for for thirty years. But now the question arose, What was she to do with him? As he had no designs upon her property or her life, she could not lecture him therefor. And, as his courage arose, he displayed a pretty, a very pretty, face, surmounted by a mass of white curls, in which shone two hen's feathers. Miss Higgins clung to feather beds, as her mother before her had done, and she was very neat; but where is the feather-bed that will not occasionally shed a few feathers, dry tears, haply falling over memories of former flights.

HE HELPED HIMSELF GENEROUSLY.

Miss Higgins' good sense, backed by her good heart, taught her that what her man needed now was a good supper and bed. But in the morning the question again vexed her, What was she to do with her man? Should she advertise him? Again she questioned him in the sun-lighted dining-room, at his excellent breakfast.

"Whereabouts do your folks live? In what place?"

He looked up mildly at her, with a large piece of buckwheat cake and syrup midway between his plate and mouth, and answered obediently:

"Our folks's house."

"Who is your folks?"

"Father."

The allies were called in. The stiffly-starched inquest sat on Miss Higgins' man, the additional result of their cross-questioning being that there was every evidence that the father of Miss Higgins' man belonged to that corrupt and shameless sect—widowers!

Miss Higgins trembled.

"Had she not better dispose of her man at once? Was it not, in a way, encouraging widowers in their nefarious doings, to harbor these small men?"

She asked these questions with some relenting of heart, for already had the childish charms of her man won upon her; and it was with great relief that she heard the decision of Aurelia, the most radical of the allies.

"No, keep him here. Such a chance was seldom vouchsafed to the allies to teach one of these men — widowers — a lesson they would not soon forget. Punish that wretch, that unnatural widower, by saying nothing about the child. Let him think he was lost. Let him hunt him up the best way he can."

The youngest Miss Jones — she was only forty, and naturally timid and apprehensive — suggested that "it would be just like one of these men to come right here to Miss Higgins' after him. There wasn't anything that they hadn't the face to do. It would be jest like one of 'em to walk right into her settin-room."

Here Miss Higgins remarked, with spirit:

"I would like to see him walk into my house. He wouldn't stir a step beyond the hall; and as for that stair-carpet, I am going to take it up and cleanse it, any way."

This remark, which was warmly applauded, terminated the conference.

Johnny did not seem averse to the arrangement. He was at the age when bodily comfort overshadows the mental. He appeared to have a great deal of affection for his father; but there was a Bridget, at the very mention of whose name he almost gnashed his teeth. "She was awful; she had shaken him, pinched him, pulled his hair."

Eunice Higgins' warm heart almost melted within her at the recital of his sufferings.

A week passed away, and daily had Miss Higgins' man gained upon her affections. She was the youngest child of her parents, and had never known the delights of childish society. She had dwelt so long alone, that to have that bright, manly little face opposite hers at the breakfast table, looking out of the window, hailing her return from her short absences, his merry, innocent prattle and ringing laugh, was all more agreeable to her than she would have been willing to acknowledge.

She grew lenient to the boyish noise of her man — for the best of boys have unregulated moments — looked benignantly upon him as he capered in the garden paths, in startling proximity to her marrowfats and cluster cucumbers. She ravelled out a long stocking, and out of one of her second-best Morocco shoes made a ball for him; and when he lost it in her best meadow, she herself boldly breasted the clover waves, side by side with him, in pursuit of it.

So that beautiful week passed away; and one morning Eunice Higgins was called from her snowy dairy-room by a ring at her front door.

Opening it, she confronted a pleasant-looking man of about her own age. Woman's unerring intuition said to her, "*This is he.*" Here was the opportunity to wither him with her glances. But how could she when he looked so much like Johnny — just such a pleasant face. Eunice did not wither him. "I have been informed, madam, that there has been a boy, a runaway boy here. Is it so?"

Instead of the prussic acid and vinegar that she had designed to have in her tone, the likeness to her man so softened her voice that it was only pleasantly acidulous, like a ripe lemon, as she replied, "Yes, sir, it is."

"Is he here now?"

"Yes, sir, he is."

His anxious eyes so brightened at this, that she entirely forgot her carpets and her enmity, and actually invited him in.

No sooner was he seated than Johnny ran in with eager eyes.

AFTER THE RUNAWAY.

"O papa! papa!"

He threw his arms round his father's neck, and kissed his bearded lips; and then, in his delight, he turned and threw his arms round Eunice Higgins' neck and kissed her with the same pair of lips; and still Miss Higgins could say, in the dying words of the great statesman: "I still live!"

Mr. Dale was a man of means and leisure. He thought the air of

the little town exceedingly good. He obtained board for the summer for himself and son at the little hotel. But in all Chesterville no air was so pure and salubrious, he thought, as the air of Miss Eunice Higgins' parlor. Consequently, he sought that healthful retreat often, Johnny going before like an olive-branch.

Day after day did Mr. Dale tread over the immaculate purity of her carpets, and they were *not* taken up and "cleansed." Hour after hour did he sit upon her parlor sofa, and it was not purified with soapsuds or benzine.

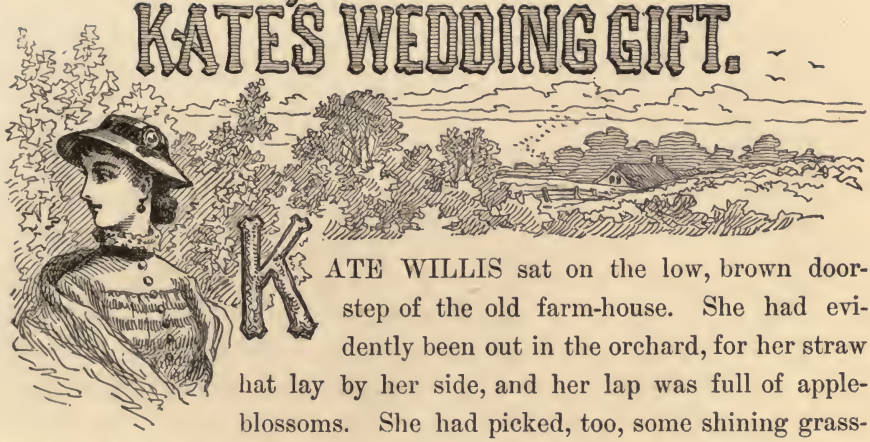
And at last, one peaceful twilight, it was on the fourteenth day of September, at the close of a long conversation — both of the parties being, at the time, of sound mind — Johnny's father kissed Miss Higgins upon her cheek.

When I say that she did not immediately burn out the spot with lunar caustic, you may be prepared for the result.

The next week Eunice Dale, late Higgins, was ignominiously expelled from the allied forces of Chesterville, her name washed out in hot streams of Hyson and still more burning indignation. But Eunice made a happy home for her man and his father, and, rejoicing in their content and her own, she wisted not of the "allied" proceedings. And thus endeth the story of MISS HIGGINS' MAN.

KATE'S WEDDING GIFT.

KATE'S WEDDING GIFT.



KATE WILLIS sat on the low, brown door-step of the old farm-house. She had evidently been out in the orchard, for her straw hat lay by her side, and her lap was full of apple-blossoms. She had picked, too, some shining grass-blades, and some clusters of emerald-green rose-leaves from the bush beside her, and was weaving them with her rosy apple-blossoms into two pretty bouquets. She was not looking very intently at her work, however. Her beautiful brown eyes were bent away over the long meadow and beyond the stream, with its willow-fringed border, to the white walls of a perfect gem of a cottage. It was nearly half a mile away, but she could see plainly its bay-windows, vine-garlanded, its pretty latticed porticoes and balconies. She was too far distant to see the glowing flower-beds and the marble-vases filled with vines, and ferns, and blossoms; but she could see the clump of rare shrubbery that rose from the velvet green of the large lawn that extended down to the highway, and on the south side down to the banks of the stream. On the north side of it, but belonging to the grounds, was a thick grove of oaks and maples. And back of the house, and separated from it by

a vegetable-garden and fruit-trees, she could see the gothic roof of the carriage-house and other out-houses. It was a beautiful place, showing evidences of refinement and good taste; and I don't blame Katy for letting her eyes rest upon it so admiringly. As she looked, she seemed to be dreaming a dream, not unpleasant, if one were to judge from the expression of the sweet face.

"IT MAKES ME FEEL BAD, CATHERINE."

But her reverie was interrupted by the entrance of good Aunt Jane into the sitting-room, in the outside door of which Kate was sitting, under the woodbine that had been trained over the rustic porch. Aunt Jane had a long-seamed stocking in her hand nearly completed; and, having settled herself in her favorite rocking-chair, commenced knitting diligently, and talking to her niece.

"Nathan Farmer was here just now, Catherine, while you were down in the orchard."

"Yes, I met him when I was coming back."

"You are going with him to the picnic, next Friday, haint you?

"I don't know—I don't really think I shall."

"Didn't Nathan ask you to go?"

"Yes."

"Well, I knew by his looks he came on that errent. Why, under the sun, don't you go? You don't want to, hey? Now that haint no good reason, Catherine. You act dretful odd lately. Seems as if you don't want to stir a step with Nathan, and there he has been payin' attention to you for goin' on six years. Seems to me you have got dretful high notions into your head. If I thought it was your goin' off to Boston to school that gin 'em to you, I should be sorry enough to think I let you go. It makes me feel bad, Catherine, to see you standin' so in your own light. I promised my poor sister on her death-bed, and then I promised your dyin' father, that I would do by you just as I would by my own child, and I want to. And you know the old sayin' just as well as I do, you ought to make hay while the sun shines."

Kate pulled some tall feathery grasses that grew by the door-step, and wove them with deft fingers into her bouquets, but made no reply. Aunt Jane looked a minute over her spectacles at her pretty niece, but was obliged to look back again at her work immediately, for her seamed knitting-work called for all her eye-sight. It did not fetter her tongue, however.

"You are too putickuler, Catherine. You are most twenty years old, and I want to see you a lookin' out for a home of your own. You know as well as I do that I haint got nothin' but a life lease of this property. If it was mine, so I could leave it to you, I shouldn't feel so about you; but, if I should die to-morrow, I couldn't leave you nothin', only the housen stuff and what little money I have laid up in the bank; and if I should enjoy poor health any length of time, I should have to use that all up, every cent of it. A poor girl, even if she is middlin'

good-looking, hadn't ought to be over and above putickuler. It stands her in hand to be up and a doin'."

"Do you want me to go out and ask somebody to marry me?"

"Now, Catherine, turn it off into a joke, just as you always do when folkes are a talkin' for your good."

"Well, what shall I do, Auntie?"

"You know, Catherine, just as well as I do, that Nathan Farmer stands ready. All he wants is a little encouragement. All he needs is a little leadin' on."

"I hate men that need a little leading on."

"Now, Catherine, I call that wicked in you, to say that you hate Nathan, such a likely young man as he is — stiddy, equinomical, good-principled, and well off. He is a young man that will get a good livin'. He will make a splendid pervider, and he would fairly worship you."

"I don't want to be worshiped. It would be wicked."

"You know what I mean, Catherine. You needn't take me up so, anybody that is talkin' for your good. I know by what Mrs. Farmer told me yesterday, that Nathan is a gettin' discouraged."

"Before I would send my mother round to complain —"

"Now you know, Catherine, that Mrs. Farmer didn't come a purpose for that. She has been a owin' me a visit quite a spell. The only wonder to me is, that Nathan haint got discouraged before now, a tryin' to keep company with you. There you will go off up stairs, and leave him alone with me for hours; and the last time you actually went to bed; and there he sot here lookin' as if he would sink."

"I wish he had," said willful Kate, but under her breath; for she dearly loved the good aunt who was lecturing her so.

"There he sot here till most ten o'clock, expectin' of you back every minute, I not wantin' to leave him alone, his face a growin' as red as blood, and I feelin' like a fool settin' up alone with a young feller Sunday night."

Here Katy broke out into a ringing peal of laughter, so sweet, that the robin, sitting on the brown eaves of the farm-house, broke out into a perfect flood of song, as if in answer to a mate. But, seeing her aunt's serious face, Kate dropped her flowers, and running up behind her, she put her arms round her neck and kissed her. Then she smoothed back the still dark locks under her dress cap, and said:

"He couldn't get a better-looking girl to sit up with."

But her aunt still looked sober; while Kate said, penitently:

"I will never do it again, Auntie, never."

"Wall, see that you don't. I wouldn't go through it again for a dollar-bill."

Here Aunt Jane looked up at the clock, and then adown the road leading to "the Corners."

"I don't believe that Hannah is going to get back time enough to get supper. She is gettin' awful shiftless lately. She's had time to make a dozen spools of thread while she has been going after one. I don't know, Catherine, but you had better hang on the tea-kettle. It is most six o'clock, and I am afraid that Mr. Heine will be here before we can get supper ready, do the best we can."

Kate picked up her scattered flowers, and put her bouquets in the tall glass vases on the mantel. Then she hung on the tea-kettle, and went to setting the table. Aunt Jane moved her chair toward the open door of the dining-room, and, as Kate came back from the kitchen, she was ready with another flow of language.

"I know, from what Mr. Heine told me last night, that he thinks it would be a splendid match for you."

Kate stood with her back to her aunt, smoothing the snowy linen cloth upon the table; and her aunt couldn't see the sudden rush of crimson in the sweet face at the mention of that name.

"A middle-aged, stiddy man as he is, that has seen so much of the world, can't help knowin' a good chance when he sees it."

Kate was placing the clear, old-fashioned china upon the table with, it seemed, more than her usual dainty precision, and did not reply.

"He is a smart, likely, forehanded man. And such men look out for the best things. They can tell when a girl gets a good chance as well as anybody. And he is one that would wish you well, too. He said so. He said that he should always be glad to hear that you was happy, or something to that effect."

"He needn't take the trouble to wish anything concerning me," Kate broke out, impetuously.

"Now I should be ashamed of that speech, Catherine. I don't see what has got into you lately, flyin' out at your best friends so. If you have got a well-wisher on earth, it is Mr. Heine. Haint he always acted just like a father to you ever since he came here a boardin', a goin' on two years now, looked out for you, and been as good to you as if you was his own child?"

"Yes, yes," said Kate; for, impulsive and warm-hearted, she could do no one an injustice long. But what was it? Was it gratitude for that fatherly kindness that brought the tears into those great brown eyes and made the sweet, sensitive mouth so tremulous, as she added, "No one else was ever so good to me—no one."

"That is just as true as you live and breathe. I knew you felt just so. I told Mr. Heine last night that you felt toward him just as you would toward a father. And well you may, for he is a smart, likely man; and for all he is so rich and knows so much, he haint stuck up a mite. A Christian gentleman—that is what the minister called him, last week. And when he and his wife settles down here he will be a help to the place."

"Is he going to be married?" faltered Kate.

"Why, that was what Nathan's mother was a tellin' me yesterday, that they said up to the Corners that Mr. Heine had got a woman

picked out up there where he came from; a rich widow, I believe they said she was. I have mistrusted it all along, as I told her. What else under the sun did he buy that house for and fix it up so? I thought, after your father died, and Judge Bacon bought it, that he fixed it up as nice as it could be. But they say it wasn't nothin' to what it is now—lace curtains, and velvet carpets, and red satin sofas and chairs. Nothin' like it in these parts. And the big south chamber, they mistrust, is to be his wife's room. They are fixin' it all off with blue velvet chairs and sofa and white lace curtains. And such sights of pictures all over the house, and the library full of books. They have got it most done, so Mr. Heine told me last night." Aunt Jane glanced out of the window, as she spoke, at the beautiful cottage that Kate had looked upon with such interest that afternoon. "Your father set out lots of them trees. He was a tasty man. Ministers generally be. I was a tellin' Mr. Heine, before he bought the place, how much you thought of it, because your father had lived there once—"

Here Aunt Jane became aware that she was alone; and, although it was a trial for her to do so, she wisely stopped talking, contenting herself with wondering anew "why Hannah didn't come," and preparing in her mind a course of mild, but lengthy, lectures, for the free benefit of that delinquent damsel when she did arrive.

Yes, Kate had gone up to her own room. Fatherly kindness! So that was the meaning of all his interest in her, his goodness, his tender thoughtfulness toward her. Why had she never realized it before? He thought of her only as a child, and she had been living in a fool's paradise all these long, bright, happy months.

Walter Heine was the chief engineer of the new railroad that passed through Wayland. He had come there the summer before; but, half a mile from there, there was rather a difficult place in the road; and what with that and trouble with contractors, he had not found it easy to push his work very rapidly. The delay had not seemed to make

him unhappy. In fact, his friends said they had never seen Heine as cheerful as he had been for this past year. Now they were working five miles away; but still he boarded at Aunt Jane's farm-house, riding out in the morning, on his black horse Selim, and back again at night. He said the road was so nearly completed that it would not be worth while to obtain another boarding-place. And then he wanted to be near, to superintend the fitting-up of the cottage. He had been heard to say that he was tired of beating round the world, and wanted a home of his own. All Wayland was delighted at the idea of his settling among them; for no one who knew him could fail to recognize him for what he truly was, "a Christian gentleman."

And Katy! To Katy he had brought a new world—a magic, beautiful world of beauty and culture. And he had been so good to her, so kind, so thoughtful. She looked around her little room. Everywhere could she see evidences of his kindness. There, in its little Parian vase, was the bouquet of ferns and wild-flowers, so exquisitely arranged, that he had brought her yesterday from the survey. There was the shelf of books, daintily bound, every one of which he had given her. And there, on the table before her, lay his last gift, the exquisite prose poems of Jean Paul, in German. They had been reading it together only last week, he helping to correct her rather imperfect pronunciation. She was an ardent little student. Her pretty head had other treasures beside its wealth of nut-brown curls; and, surely, he was the most patient of teachers. There, on the wall, was a sketch, in firm, bold lines, of a particularly favorite view of hers. Yes, she felt in her heart that no father could be kinder to a beloved child than he had been to her. But what was there in that thought so bitter-sweet, so sad? Faster and faster fell her tears. She had never thought of it. Their tastes were so alike, they had seemed so near to each other, that she never thought of his being older than herself. Yes, her aunt was right. She had of late refused to go to the rustic neighborhood gatherings,

and in her heart she knew it was because Mr. Heine never cared to go. Had he divined her foolishness, her presumption? Her cheeks burned hotly at the thought. She would be on her guard in the future.

She was bathing her eyes, her flushed cheeks, when she heard the tread of Selim coming down the road. She looked out of the window, instinctively, following the habit of months; for it had been her delight to see him, like Sir Lancelot, come riding by, in the "blue, unclouded weather." He usually sat his horse like a king, as he really was, of nature's own crowning. But to-night he seemed weary, listless, and so intent in thought, that black Selim stopped at the gate before his master seemed to be aware where he really was. Following blind habit also, Mr. Heine's first glance was up to the window of Kate's room. He saw her, and lifted his hat with a grave bow, but the smile with which he had always greeted her had vanished. Again, the hot blood burned Kate's fair cheeks. He had discovered her foolishness, and was teaching her a lesson. But he need not be afraid. Cold and distant was Kate to him at supper. Coolly, studiously polite was Mr. Heine to her. Aunt Jane was neither sensitive nor impressible; but, as a good-natured blossoming peach-tree, in the spring of the year, without being able to philosophize upon it, may haply feel the breezes that blow from snow-drifts in mountain hollows, so Aunt Jane was blindly conscious of a change in the atmosphere.

After supper, Mr. Heine went out and sat on the southern porch, in the lovely sunset light that rippled down through the clusters of woodbine leaves. This had been his favorite time for reading with Kate, or to her, talking with her, hearing her play and sing. But Kate, just within the open door with her sewing, did not seem inclined for reading, conversation, or music. And Mr. Heine did not call her to his side, as he had been wont to do, with, "Here, Kate, come and see this. Isn't this beautiful?" holding the open book so she could look over it with him; or, "Come, Katy, and sing Annie Laurie for me." He had taken

a newspaper from the little stand as he passed it, but it lay unopened upon his knee, and there was a very grave, preoccupied look in his face.

He was a very handsome man, although there were a few silver threads visible in the thick brown hair that was thrown carelessly back from his broad white forehead, and in the sweeping beard and moustache of the same color. It was a strong, earnest face, the face of one who had lived much in his thirty-nine years, thought much, perhaps suffered much; for there was a strength and a patience in his face

NATHAN'S APPROACH.

that is never learned save in that divine school of suffering, where God is the teacher.

Sitting there in the twilight shadows, Mr. Heine saw Nathan Farmer coming up the garden-path. He greeted the good-looking but

bashful youth with his usual kindly courtesy, but he did not seem inclined to make any conversation with him. But as Nathan passed into the sitting-room, Kate fully made up for Mr. Heine's silence. She had never been so cordial to him; and poor overjoyed, surprised Nathan was in the seventh heaven.

His being there again that night was a triumph of his mother's diplomacy over his bashful reluctance; for that good woman could not lightly lose the hope of calling sweet Kate Willis her daughter. She had, as she had often remarked to her bosom friends, "picked her out for Nathan." And as she was rather a strong-minded woman, who usually accomplished any plans she undertook, she was not inclined to relinquish this.

Nathan had always admired Kate excessively; and had he not, he was of that mild and amiable nature that he would have wedded any respectable young lady that his mother saw fit to select for him. But Kate had wearied the good youth. She had seemed like a rare, beautiful bird, flying so far above his head that he was often in despair. Cordial and kind was Kate to him, for they had been like brother and sister in their childhood, and she did full justice to Nathan's solid goodness of heart. She really liked him very much, as long as he walked undeviatingly the straight and narrow path of friendship. But whenever, bewitched by her beauty and sisterly friendliness, he ventured to meander one bashful step into love's pathway, she was snow, ice. So, goaded on by his mother, and attracted, and repelled, and tormented by Kate, this excellent youth often thought that his hair must turn prematurely white as wool. It was but very little removed from that color now. Grief and anxiety would have had but little change to effect. But it is only justice to Nathan to say, that he was to be pitied.

He had gone home that afternoon much depressed, and, in answer to his mother's anxious inquiries, he said that "Kate didn't say right out that she wouldn't go, but she acted dreadful offish. I am a

good mind to ask Matilda White for her company; I have as good a mind to as I have to eat." But his mother assured him that Kate only needed urging; all girls acted so. She energetically recited to him that couplet so inspiring to the manly mind, "Faint heart never won fair lady." She brightened up the armor of his courage anew. She finally equipped him with an errand to Aunt Jane — she wanted to borrow her swifts.

Aunt Jane bustled out to get them, willing to give her favorite ample opportunity. Mr. Heine heard Nathan ask Kate "hadn't you better make up your mind to go to the picnic?" heard her ready assent, and then he took his hat and walked down to "the Corners" to the post-office. On his return he met Nathan walking homeward in the bright moonlight, happy-faced, stepping lightly, bearing Aunt Jane's swifts like a palm of victory.

Kate went to the picnic, and the next Sunday evening she did not leave Aunt Jane to entertain Nathan. Poor Katy! She was doing what many a woman has done, and will do again — she was on the eve of doing herself an irremediable injury, to falsely convince one man of her indifference.

Four weeks passed away. One afternoon Mr. Heine, who had been to the village all day, as they arose from the tea-table, announced to Aunt Jane, that he was to leave Wayland the next day.

"Leave Wayland?" asked Aunt Jane, in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Yes, the road was completed now, and he had a very advantageous offer from Germany, to take charge of a new line of railroad there. If he accepted it, as he thought he should, he must start for New York to-morrow to catch the next steamer. They wanted him to come at once. At all events, he should leave Wayland in the morning."

"What are you going to do with your new house?" cried Aunt Jane.

"I have disposed of it to a friend."

Kate, standing in the open hall door, heard every word; and now she slipped up stairs to her own room, and threw herself face downward upon the bed. Not weeping. No; but lying there, silent, motionless, as if she were dead. An hour passed, and still she lay there in the same position.

"Catherine!" Aunt Jane was calling from the foot of the staircase. "Catherine, Mr. Heine is going to walk over to his house, and wants you to go with him."

"I can't go."

She heard Aunt Jane's step coming up the stairs, and she rose and sat down by the table, with her back to the door. The door opened, and Aunt Jane put her head in.

"For the land's sake, Catherine, do you go. You might take as much pains as that for him, seein' it is the last job we shall have to do for him. He has got his trunk all packed, and is goin' to start the first thing in the morning. I know your mind is all took up another way; but you ought to use a man well, a man that has been just like a father to you. He will think dretful strange if you don't go."

"I'll go, Aunt Jane," said she, desperately.

"Wall, so do; and you'd better hurry up, for he has got his hat all on, a standin' out by the gate, a waitin' for you."

In a few minutes a little, white-robed figure, with her straw hat tied down over her face, with its blue ribbons, stood by Mr. Heine's side; and she said to him without looking up:

"I am ready, Mr. Heine."

In almost perfect silence they walked down the pleasant country road. The last time! the last time! I think these words were sounding all the time in Katy's heart. There is something inexpressibly sad in doing anything for the last time, if it be but to pluck the last autumn flower. And Kate knew that this was her last hour with Walter Heine.

And when he went he would take her heart with him wherever he went, over whatever broad ocean he might sail. Poor Katy! She thought, too, in the rash sorrow of her undisciplined heart, that he would take her life—her life too.

Mr. Heine opened the pretty little iron gate, and they passed on through the large, beautiful lawn, up the portico, into the dwelling. It was fully completed now, and poor little Katy could not repress an exclamation of delight and wonder at the exquisite beauty of the rooms, where ample wealth and an artist taste had made them simply perfect. They went through them all, Mr. Heine trying to make some commonplace remarks concerning them, with a very grave face, however. As they passed out again on the front portico, Mr. Heine laid his hand upon Kate's arm, detaining her, as she was about to descend the steps.

"Sit down a moment, please. There is something I wish to say to you."

Kate sat down, rather wonderingly, upon one of the little carved benches, and Mr. Heine sat down by her side.

"I want to tell you something—something of my past life."

Kate sat silently waiting, and he went on, in a low, quiet voice.

"Katy, long ago, a beautiful false woman gave me a great sorrow, and for years I renounced and shunned the society of all the sex for her sake. Afterward, after I thought I had outgrown all capability of loving, chance threw me into the society of one so good and sweet, that, before I was aware, she had become dearer to me, ten-fold dearer, than any other woman had ever been. I loved her better than my own life, and I dreamed a foolish dream. I thought I might win her in time to care for me. I might have known that her young heart would turn to another young heart. How could I hope that one so young and so beautiful could love me, save with a child's affection? And so, one day, the waking came, and I saw how vain my dream had been."

He paused a moment, perhaps to steady his voice, for it had grown tremulous. Kate sat silently, with her face averted from him, and a bird out in the grove filled the interval with its low, plaintive evening song.

"It was when I was dreaming my foolish dream, Katy, that I bought this place. I bought it, and fitted it up for the woman I loved. I saw the sweet face in every room — "

Again he paused, then went on speaking rapidly, resolutely turning to the little, still, girlish figure.

"I want you to have it, Katy. The papers are made out giving it to you. You will take, wont you, as a wedding gift, from your old friend? I am rich, and it is but a trifle to me. And it will make me happier, away off there in Germany, in my dull business life, to know that you are making sweet, household pictures in every room, though a happier man than I will be here to see them."

"What, Katy, tears! Hush, darling, I don't blame you. Did you think I did? I never thought of blaming you. Don't cry so. What have I said to hurt your little tender heart so?"

He smoothed back the clustering, falling curls from the bent forehead, the only caress he had ever ventured on giving her, trying to feel, as he did so, as a father might who was parting from a beloved and only child. But I don't think he succeeded. I am afraid the deep, passionate, despairing love was stronger than any that ever filled a father's heart upon earth.

"What is it, my child, my darling?"

He bent his tall head down to the drooping little figure; and even then I hardly think he fully heard the whispered words, so very low and faint they were. But love's ears are the keenest upon earth, and there is a mystic language that speaks from soul to soul, too fine and sacred to be translated into any earthly language. I think, by the sudden light that lit up his sad blue eyes, that he understood it. But I think he did

not fully realize his happiness until he took the hands from the blushing face, and gave one look into the tell-tale eyes; and then — then he hid their sweet light on his bosom.

Mr. Heine did not go to Germany, and Katy lived in that beautiful home, and made "sweet household pictures" for her husband's constant admiration in every room. A dainty little mistress, sitting demurely behind the silver-service in the great dining-room, admired by all her husband's grand friends; a most appreciative large-eyed listener, sitting on a low stool by her husband's side, in the cosy library, as he read to her, in the long winter evenings; standing in her snowy muslins and fluttering blue ribbons at sunset, out by the carved pillars of the portico, amidst the clustering roses, waiting for the quick, firm step that returns so lightly to wife and home; and, on the second year of their marriage, making the sweetest picture of all, he thought, sitting by the open window of their room, in the twilight shadows, singing low songs, with a baby's head on her bosom.

Nathan is still contemplating matrimony. His eyes are rather directed toward Matilda White; but his mother, not fully approving of her, is said to be reconnoitering in another direction, and he is patiently waiting. What the result will be, of course I cannot say. But Nathan has our best wishes that her quest will terminate successfully and happily for him.

KITTY ROSS.

KITTY ROSS.

"SHE pieced up every block of it with her own hands, Malviny did." And the proud mother spread abroad the gorgeous folds of the patch-work bed-quilt before the eyes of the bewildered young minister like a triumphant banner.

"She thought at first she would have it a album quilt; but, finally, she decided on a blazing star, as Malviny says to me, 'it looks so kind o' heavenly.' You know stars are a bright yellow, and the sky is a blue ground-work jest like this. She thought it gave it a kind of a sacred look. She is dreadful religeus, Malviny is. I have said to her father, many a time, 'If she is ever snatched away from us, Pa, I hope he will be a religeus man that snatches her.' A good many told me, when she was a little girl, that she was just cut for a minister's wife, she was so equinomical and industrious. She is an awful worker; there is seven hundred pieces in this bed-quilt; that shows some industry, don't it, Mr. Thurston?"

"I beg your pardon, madam; I am afraid I didn't quite understand you!" His rather dreamy, gray eyes were looking out of the open window, down the emerald, daisy-empearled meadow, stretching away to the green woods.

"I was saying there is seven hundred pieces of calico in this bed-quilt; I didn't begrech layin' out the calico for her — not a bit; she cut 'em all out in one day."

"Kitty helped her cut 'em out, for I seen her; n' I want a piece of pie, or bread n' butter." Sammy, the fearless, had entered the room, and stood before his mother, with pleading in his tone, and utter indifference in his demeanor towards the visitor.

THE BLAZING STAR.

"Yes; Kitty helped her a sight," said Mrs. Ross, commencing to fold up the bed-quilt; and she added, severely, "Little boys should be seen, and not heard."

"I am tired of bein' seen; I want to be heard a spell; n'cant I have the pie or bread n' butter? I want some strawberries on it. Haint Kitty got back yet? I seen her start for 'em more'n a 'nour ago."

"When Kitty gets a book in her hand, or gets out doors, there is no knowin' when she will be seen

again. She is so different from Malviny. Why, if you will believe it, Mr. Thurston, if that girl should tell you the truth to-day, I believe she would say that she thought a little bit of moss out of the woods was prettier than this blazing-star bed-quilt."

As she gave utterance to this astounding atrocity, on the part of Kitty, she stood by the table, folding the article in question; and her last-born, standing opposite her, gazing at her keenly from beneath his torn straw hat, said: —

"Malviny's crosser'n a bear, and Kitty haint. She don't order a feller around. What are you steppin' on my foot for, mother?"

"Samuel Ross, do you go right out into the kitchen, and wash your face. I should be ashamed to come into the room where there is company with such a looking face." He did not move, and she continued, with a threatening glance at him, "Do you want me to have a reckoning with you?" Evidently he did not, for this question was potent; he left the room immediately. Mrs. Ross laid the bed-quilt in the bed-room, saying, as she came back into the room: —

MRS. ROSS.

"Malviny will be in, in a few minutes."

Again the young minister's eyes wandered out of the open window.

"Isn't that your youngest daughter coming through the meadow?"

"La, no! She haint my daughter; that is Kitty Ross, my husband's brother's girl. I took her though when she was an infant babe; brought her up on a bottle, and done for her as if she was my own."

"I have noticed her face in church," said he.

He did not say that her face in the family-pew reminded him of a mountain daisy, in a bed of hollyhocks. Neither did he find it necessary to tell what an inspiration she had been to him; that when some noble truth came warm from his own heart, the sudden light that would spring up in those shy, brown eyes, had shown him, that, though strangers, they were near kindred. And, if the whole two hundred of his congregation had been absent, and those appreciative eyes present, he would think he had a full house. These thoughts, which he did not speak, were still in his mind, when two doors opened simultaneously, and Malviny and Kitty entered. Malviny had, in a few moments, attired herself in her best, to do honor to the young minister, and she sailed in through the hall-door, just as Kitty entered through the kitchen-door, into the sitting-room, with her basket of berries. She had on a print-dress and a straw hat; but she had found a great bunch of wild-flowers and grasses, and her cheeks were as rosy as her strawberries, and her eyes fell shyly as they met the earnest look of admiration the young minister bent upon her, as he took the hand that was free in his own.

"Malviny, you go right into the parlor with Mr. Thurston. I have been waiting for you to come down; and Kitty, you go out into the kitchen-porch, and look over your strawberries. And Malviny," the mother called after them, as they passed through the hall, "you show the minister your feather-flowers, and the hair-wreath you have just done."

The young minister, as in duty bound, respectfully examined the flowers, in which the hair of the living and the dead of the Ross family blossomed again. The feathers, haply fallen from defiant ganders, were also faithfully commented upon, and then his attention seemed to be wandering.

"I noticed you had some beautiful flowers in your kitchen garden, as I passed this afternoon."

"Oh! they are some of Kitty's. Father gave her a little piece of the garden; he don't make any difference between her and me, though she is only a girl we took, and is dependent on us for a home."

The color came into Mr. Thurston's face, but any remark he might have wished to make was cut short by the entrance of Sammy, the terrible. He came in with an air of boldness, befitting Robert Kidd, "as he sailed, as he sailed." But a close observer could see that he was inwardly ill at ease, as if he expected his sojourn would be short in that land of promise. His presentiment was doomed to quick fulfillment, for scarcely had his little tow-breeches touched the chair-bottom, when Malviny asked him, with much sweetness: —

"Sammy, won't you go out and get me a drink of water?"

Sammy had no fear of man before his eyes, and he arose in his wrath.

"Yes; gim'me a drink of water! That is always the way! Gim'-me a drink of water! an' then, when I go out after it, mother won't lem'me come in again! When a feller is here, it makes you awful dry to have me jest step into the room."

"I shall tell mother of you, Samuel," said Malviny, with a red face.

"Yes! there it is again! gem'me into more trouble!"

"She will have a reckoning with you, Samuel."

As we have said, Sammy had no fear of man; but, before a "reckoning," even his iron courage faltered. Whatever this "reckoning" might be, he had evidently learned, from past experience, that the loss was sure to be upon his side of the account, and at the mention of it he departed, pausing, however, at the door to make up a face at his sister.

"I am so ashamed of him, Mr. Thurston; but we all humor him most to death, and it makes him act awful bad."

"Oh! don't mention it," said the young minister, biting his lip. "But we were just speaking of your flowers, Miss Ross. I think I

noticed a kind of rose that was exceedingly beautiful and rare; suppose we go out and see them."

Miss Ross was delighted, of course, to walk even so short a distance with the handsome young minister; and as she told her mother afterward, "as they walked through the front yard, the faces of the three Talmadge girls were so flattened against the window-panes opposite that their noses looked like the pictures of the Hottentots in her old Geography." And Malviny further remarked to her mother that "it is shameful the way those Talmadge girls are after the minister, and they Methodist girls, too, and he an Episcopal."

"Yes," cried Mrs. Ross, "I don't see how folks can make up their faces to act so bold; but it does seem as if some folks haint got no pride."

Excepting a kitten, delivered, in its weakness, into the hands of children, for them to use at pleasure, I think there are few objects more truly deserving of sympathy, than a young unmarried minister. Then, if ever, must he be wary, circumspect; he must look neither to the right hand nor the left. His persecution is not like the old martyrs, but he will be stoned in the synagogue by soft glances, and honeyed smiles, and endearing words. He will be sawn asunder in the market-place, and in the seclusion of his own study, by curious old ladies, who will gather his past history and settle his future. He will not wander in sheep-skin and goat-skin, but in slippers manifold, embroidered with every known device.

If the young minister be cowardly, he is often constrained to gird up his loins and flee to the mountains. But the Rev. Floyd Thurston was not cowardly. From his earliest youth he was noted for his quiet self-possession. He always knew just what he wanted, and he usually obtained it in a straightforward manner. Like Sir Galahad,

> "His strength was as the strength of ten,
> Because his heart was pure."

To do him justice, he was a very pure-minded young man, earnestly devoted to his sacred calling; and although he was talented, rich, and handsome, he was not vain; consequently, he passed unnoticed many things that would have affected a vainer man. I think Malviny had forgotten that the old kitchen-porch opened directly upon the garden, and was not very remote from it. But I think the young minister had not, for his first glance was in that direction, and there sat Kitty hulling her strawberries — and Kitty was laughing.

Down in the meadow that afternoon, Kitty had not been very gay, though she loved every flower and bird, and every little white wanderer of a cloud as well. When her cousin was imperious, and her aunt cross, and she felt herself to be more lonely than ever, she loved to get away from it all out into the woods, into the fields; and dear Nature, gentlest of all consolers, how tenderly did she comfort this sweet little soul! It seemed as if it were such a large world after all, and the good God had a place in it for everything. Even the least little mite of a grass-spray looked up hopeful, and seemed to feel at ease; and the great, calm heavens overhead never twitted it of being so small and worthless after it had done so much for it, in the way of dew and sunshine.

Sometimes, I am afraid, little Kitty was wicked enough to wish in her heart that the "bottle she had been brought up on," and which her aunt so often set before her, had been broken, and her infant life with it. But this afternoon she was too busy to give way to sorrowful memories or forebodings, for her aunt had ordered her to pick five quarts.

She was willing to work faithfully for her aunt. The neighbors said, "she worked like a slave, and it was a shame!" But I don't think Kitty cherished any revengeful thoughts; she wanted to do her duty, and if it was a loveless duty, it was only the harder for her. She worked diligently, and had gotten her basket nearly full, when down in a corner of the rail-fence, in a clump of alders, she found a bird's-nest, full of little ones almost ready to fly away.

"Oh, you darlings!" she murmured, looking down into it with her soft, wistful eyes. "You happy darlings! that have got some one to love you! Old bird, you needn't stand up there so anxious. Do you think I would harm a feather on their little heads!"

Then she wondered if any one would ever care for her as that old constant bird did for her little ones. She meant really to care for her as Clive Newcome did for Ethel. She had just been reading "The Newcomes." She would asked for nothing else on earth, she thought, if she could only be loved like that. She didn't care if it never amounted to anything. Little Kitty did not think of a settlement and an establishment, but all her life her poor heart, her hungry, loving heart, had been asking for bread, and got only a stone. How beautiful it would be, altogether too blessed for her, she thought, as she went up to the house through the blossomy clover, to have a pair of dark-gray eyes look upon her with loving tenderness. Somehow, lately, all her

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

air-castles — and she was a great builder of them — had raised themselves up in a Gothic form, with a stained window for a background; and all her heroes had looked down upon her with gray, earnest eyes; they all had handsome, dreamy faces, and their hands were spread abroad in benediction. Strange attitude for bold crusaders and knights in armor — but so it was.

When her aunt had dismissed her so summarily from the room, little Kitty was not unhappy; on the contrary, I think she was never so happy in all her life — for had she not met just such a look as she dreamed of down in the meadow? The memory of that was enough to make her bliss; and the berries she was hulling so busily, might have re-ripened beneath the tender sunlight in the brown eyes. But when the young minister looked at her, we said Kitty was laughing, and it chanced in this wise: Sammy, rudely driven from the parlor, had, as he always did, taken his wounded spirit to Kitty; and such solace did he find in her society, that he had forgotten his grief. Yet, still smarting under the sense of the injury his sister had done him, he was in the corner of the porch, giving a theatrical representation of a scene to come off, when he was a wealthy householder, and Malviny a beggar at his gate. Kitty knew she ought not to laugh; but her sense of the humorous was very keen, and Sammy was a zealous, if not a finished performer. His hand was just stretched out, waving Malviny scornfully from his palace-door, when, suddenly, he dropped his tragic air, and exclaimed, "By Hokey, there they be now!" and, by one of the master strokes for which he was famous, he tripped over the basket of berries, and, entangling his foot in the trailing clothes-line that depended from one corner of the porch, he fell headlong to the ground.

The young minister would have disgraced his sacred calling, had he stood coldly by and seen a fellow-being in distress. He released Sammy from his perilous position, wiped the tears with his own snowy handkerchief, and then insisted on helping Kitty pick up her berries.

"Oh, no!" said Malviny, who stood aloof, by reason of her new muslin dress, which both she and her mother mistrusted "wouldn't wash." But Mr. Thurston insisted. They were the most tantalizing of berries, and, upon finding themselves free once more, had scampered into unheard-of places of concealment. But into their remote fastnesses, behind large, glossy plantain-leaves, and golden-disked dandelions, did the young minister follow them, as diligently as he had ever burrowed after a Greek root, and far more delightfully, I warrant. Once or twice, his white hand came in contact with Kitty's little brown pink-tipped fingers, and once her long, sweeping curls grazed his cheek; but he endured both these trials in a true Christian spirit of resignation; indeed, so disciplined was his mind, that I am certain, when she had thus smitten him upon one cheek, he would willingly have turned the other also.

The acquaintance, thus begun, Mr. Thurston did not allow to cease; his visits to the farm-house were frequent and lengthy. Mrs. Ross, openly and proudly, Malviny, demurely, accepted them as tributes to her charms, both as a rich man's daughter, and as a maiden who was alike industrious and economical. So time ran along, till one evening Mr. Thurston walked home with Kitty from an evening meeting. That night, in the sacred retiracy of their bed-room, while on the huge feather-bed, good uncle Phy slept the sleep of the just, Mrs. Ross lay awake in deep thought. Finally, she hunched her husband in the side, changing an incipient snore, into,

"What's wanted, mother?"

"I have been thinking, Pa," was the answer, "that Kitty would like to go away somewhere this summer, and mebby we had ought to let her go."

Kitty was beloved by her uncle, as well as by Sammy, the terrible, and the mother felt that she must be wary.

"You know she has worked pretty hard," she continued, "all the

spring, and I 'spose folks will talk if we don't do well by her. And her aunt Huldy — she is her own aunt, if we never did any of us see her — she has been writing to her time and again for her to come and visit her; and she is well off, and getting pretty well along in years; and she might leave Kitty something. I don't know as we had ought to stand in her light."

"I thought you couldn't spare her, last summer, when her aunt wrote for her."

"Philander, you little know the feelings a woman has for a child she has brought up; I am willing to spare Kitty this summer."

"Well, well! you women folks must have it your own way; you will, any way; only she hadn't better stay long."

In this philosophical frame of mind, uncle Phy turned himself to the wall, and resumed his nocturnal music, seemingly taking up the broken note just where it was rudely interrupted by his wife's elbow.

So it chanced that, the next Sabbath, the young minister missed the shy, brown eyes, that had been such a help and delight to him. That day he preached to empty seats, and the next afternoon he found it convenient to call at the farm-house. Malviny met him at the door, radiant and blooming; her mother also was in fine spirits; but they both seemed afflicted with a sudden loss of memory. They couldn't, either of them, for their life, recollect the name of the place where Kitty had gone. But it was a good ways off, and they didn't know but she had gone for good. She wasn't much help to them, and they thought mebby they shouldn't have her come back at all. Mrs. Ross added, however, with some show of sentiment, that "though Kitty was so hard to manage, and so different from Malviny, still, when a woman had brought a child up on a bottle, and done for 'em like her own, she couldn't help missing 'em."

Mr. Thurston was not very sociable, Malviny thought, when her mother, as in duty bound, left them alone. He could not possibly stay

to tea, and he was just drawing on his gloves, preparatory to leaving, when Mrs. Ross, who had in her loneliness wandered up stairs, rushed into the room with frightened eyes, and waving cap-strings. She held a paper in her hand, which she had found in Sammy's room, and then they both remembered that he had been missing since the early dinner. The paper, which the young minister took out of the mother's trembling hand, and read, was as follows: It was written seemingly with much effort, and each line commenced with a capital letter, like poetry.

"I am going to run away
Where Kitty is I love her she
Is sweet Kitty is I will
Nott stay where foaks are
Kross and will not give a
Feller 2 peaces of py
When he Are Starvin Hungry
So no moar at preasant
U need not look for me for
Deer parints I will not be took
Alive So no moar from yure Sun

SAMMUIL.

p s I Hoap Malviny wont
Be dry now when she has a Bo."

As they read, the grief-stricken parent recollected that he had been refused two pieces of pie at dinner. The premises were searched unsuccessfully, and as Uncle Phy was absent, Mr. Thurston volunteered to walk to the village, only two miles distant, in search of the fugitive. About half a mile from the village, he discovered Sam, who was resting from his fatigue on a stone-heap, but with his bundle suspended from a long pole, still upon his shoulders. This bundle, as after-search revealed, consisted of a flaming cravat, and a paper-collar of his father's, a box of percussion caps, a steel-trap, an empty powder-horn, a pair of thin, Sunday trousers, a jack-knife, six jell-tarts, and a generous slice of sponge-

cake. He scornfully refused to return home, strictly affirming that to Riverdale he would go, to Aunt Huldy's, to see Kitty.

"Riverdale? Aunt Huldah Bliss?" The young minister's face was radiant. But by putting forth all his power of persuasion, which so few could resist, he succeeded in bringing the young prodigal home, where, for that night at least, he found there was pie enough and to spare. Mrs. Ross and Malviny overwhelmed the young minister with gratitude, which he received with good-nature; in fact, he seemed to be in such a blissful state of mind that nothing came amiss to him. But he could not stay to tea; his vacation was so near at hand, he was exceedingly busy.

THE RUNAWAY.

His vacation!— They didn't know he was to have one.

Yes; he was to have three months' vacation — the church needed repairs; it had been arranged at the last vestry-meeting.

After he went away, Mrs. Ross assured Malviny that when it made a certain person so happy to do another certain person a good turn, she thought that certain person had better be getting ready for what might happen. Malviny blushed, shook her head playfully at her mother, and betook herself to her patch-work, for she was now piecing up a sunflower bed-quilt.

The third day after the hegira of the terrible, Kitty Ross looked up from her sewing, at the mild face opposite her, which beamed out from its lace ruffles, like the moon from fleecy clouds.

"I shall be just as glad to see him as if he were my own son," said the old lady, impressively, as she folded up her letter, took off her spectacles and wiped them, and looked up at her niece. Little Kitty was sitting in a rocking-chair, before the window, and Aunt Huldah thought she looked like a picture, in her white muslin dress, and her beautiful head resting against the carved mahogany of the old-fashioned chair-back. There was a wonderfully pretty color in her face, too, as she asked, shyly:—

"Why does he happen to come here visiting, Aunty, when you are no relative of his?"

"His mother was the best friend I ever had in my life, and when she died, his father was most distracted. They lived next door to me then, and I took Floyd — he was nine years old — right here, and I kept him a year. His father died, too, a year or two after that, and Floyd went away to school, and to college, and finally got to be a minister. But he has always considered this a sort of home, and has been here every little while ever since; and if he were my own son he couldn't be more welcome, for a better boy never lived."

Aunt Huldah gave the letter a final fold, previous to its life-long seclusion in her bureau-drawer, and then exclaimed, triumphantly:—

"How glad I am, Kitty, I made you take that sage-tea, last night. You looked dreadful pale when you first came here. Sage is an excel-

lent herb. I haven't seen such a color in your cheeks, never; and your eyes shine just like stars."

Aunt Huldah's sage-tea was, indeed, marvelous in its effects, if that "excellent herb" were really the cause of the brown eyes' lustre; for they were, indeed, like stars, and the cheeks — why, blush roses were pale in comparison to them.

So the Rev. Floyd Thurston thought, as he sat by her side in the vine-shadowed portico, through the long, sweet twilights, or wandered through the fields with her, the fields that "ran, dew-dabbled to the sea" — for Aunt Huldah lived near the sea-shore — teaching her so many things. Why, he knew everything, Kitty thought. Why, every bird's name, and all the lovely ferns and lichens and mosses she had loved, without a proper introduction. Why, they were old friends to him: he could name them every one, and the rocks, shale, eocene, and pliocene, and what not. Why, he had only to glance at these solid mysteries, to be able to tell its name and age; and how he could talk about the wonder of their creation. How wonderfully wise he was? And what a marvel it was that he could care for her enough to take such pains to teach her, little, ignorant thing that she was? Thus Kitty thought in her sweet humility. But Floyd Thurston thought that the bright, eager eyes she raised to him, when some new truth dawned upon her; her quick sympathy as he read some choice bit out of Ruskin, Thoreau, or Hugh Miller, was the best reward he could possibly have. Sometimes he would read poetry to her, "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," "Genevieve," and "Maud," and the "Idyls of the King." Not always then did the star-like eyes beam fully upon him. The shy eyelids would often droop over them like clouds of snow. He read these poems with a soulful earnestness, I can assure you. So, through those long, bright summer days, and early autumn, the young minister taught Kitty the sweetest lesson upon earth.

And in blissful unconsciousness, through these very days, Aunt

Ross, the schemer, rejoicing in her master-stroke, bought bright-colored calicoes for Malviny, to cut into fantastic shapes, and at the same time taught her lessons of economy, befitting the chief lady of the parish.

But, as the last Sabbath in September drew near, the parish became like the troubled sea, which rests not day nor night. Signs had been seen, not in the heavens, but at the parsonage, at which curious heads were shaken. Carpets were visible out under the plum-trees; the curtains in the bay-window were known to be taken down and washed; and, upon good authority, more "groceries" had been purchased at the village-store than had ever gone into that house at one time. This might, it is true, betoken the return of the minister only. The motherly old lady in charge, who had been Mr. Thurston's nurse, was reticent. The best pumper in the neighborhood (it is needless to say it was a female,) had plied her pump in vain — the well was too deep; no information could be gained. But it was well to be watchful, and it could not be denied that suspicion was abroad.

Miss Hathway, a maiden who had bewailed her singleness, forbid it for me to say how many years, called upon Mrs. Ross on Saturday afternoon, and remarked, "I mistrust that the minister is going to bring home a wife."

"Oh, pshaw!" said Mrs. Ross, "I guess I know which way his mind is sot. Malviny, you go and bring out a breadth of your new rag-carpet, and show it to Miss Hathway. Haint that copperas-color splendid? Malviny colored it herself."

Miss Hathway, like the rest of the unmarried females of the parish, had seen visions, and dreamed dreams, in which, if an angel figured, it was not a female angel, but a young man with a long, white robe, like those in the sepulchre. She praised the carpet, but coldly. "I'm not over partial to copperas-color, I prefer but'nut."

Within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, the congregation in St. Jude's had not met at so early an hour; and the fans which so wildly

fluttered in the air were but faint symbols of the agitation that shook the breasts of their flutterers. But the sun, which never looked down on a lovelier day, hastened not his chariot. Neither did Mr. Thurston appear sooner than his wont. At precisely half-past ten he walked in, and by his side — the fans sank in the laps of the faint fanners — it could not be! and yet it was! Kitty Ross! Kitty Ross Thurston! for the tender pride and happiness of the young minister's face could not be mistaken.

A SENSATION.

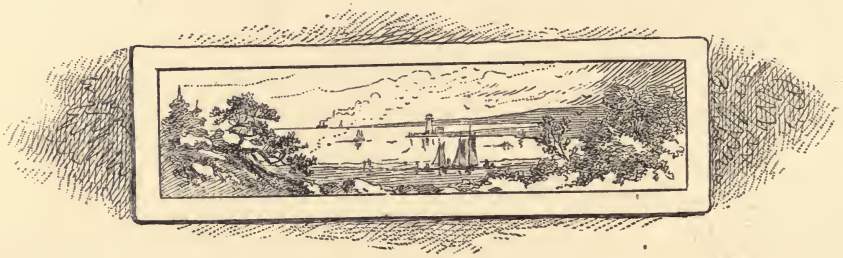
The faces of Mrs. Ross and Malviny were tablets on which unutterable thoughts were traced. But for them fainting was impossible, for at the first view of the pretty, pretty face, looking out from its white draperies, Sammy, the terrible, rose in his seat, and whispered audibly to the stricken Malviny, who, divining his intent, grasped him firmly by the back of his little plaid pantaloons.

"Leg'go, Malviny! Lem'me go, I say! I will go to Kitty!"

"I'll Kitty you!" she whispered to him, in direful accents.

But this singular threat was powerless. He writhed and struggled, till his mother, like the ancient mariner, "held him with her eye," and assured him that a "reckoning" would inevitably be the result of another movement on his part.

That brought him to his seat, just as Kitty lifted her sweet eyes to her husband's face, and the service began.



BEATRICE MANNING.

A WOMAN'S HEART.

GRACE WILTON sat at the breakfast table yet, although a half hour had gone by since the rest of the family had left the room. She was not weeping, for she was not one of the women given to tears and demonstrations of any sort. But looking full in the pale face, you would think it would be well for her to weep if tears would wash away any of the pain and bitterness in those large, sad eyes.

The time had been when it would have done one good to but look into those great bright eyes, so full of enthusiasm, and life, and happiness were they. What had changed them so? The world said she had greatly improved her condition since that date by her marriage with the rising young lawyer, Lawrence Wilton. And she was a working girl, one of the toilers of life, when he chose her for his wife. She had been finely educated, especially in music, which was her passion and delight. Indeed, she loved it so well that it was more of a pleasure than a weariness to her to teach her large and enthusiastic class, for she inspired them with her own love of it.

She had really a wonderful gift in this direction; she had already composed several pieces exceedingly creditable for so young a person,

and her teacher gave her promise of a grand future of fame and fortune; and, as she was naturally ambitious and enthusiastic, these prophecies gave her much delight. She had excellent success as a teacher, for she loved her work; and then, after the last lesson was given for the day, what a pleasure it was for her to tell over the events and successes of the past hours to her good brother John — she kept his house for him — and to listen to his cheerful views of life and to his hopes and dreams for her, while Molly, the neat servant girl, brought in the tea things. He made such a pet of her, that if she had not naturally a noble nature, she would have run a risk of being spoiled. Brother John was not rich, but he was abundantly able to supply all the comforts of life for himself and his pet sister; and all Grace earned was her own, every penny of it, to do with as she chose. Fortunately, she chose to use it without abusing it. At the close of every term quite a little sum found its way to the savings bank for the proverbial rainy day; and for the rest, when she wanted a pair of new gloves or a new gown she had no one to ask for money, she had only to draw out her little pearl portmonnaie, and step into the shop and suit herself. And if she met a case of lamentable want, again she had only to consult that little pearl oracle to relieve it. Grace was extremely warm-hearted and generous, and I think she accounted this as one of the chiefest of her pleasures. Indeed, she had such a liberal heart, that, had it not been for her sensible head, this little pearl portmonnaie would have often come to grief through lavishness of charity. But the good heart and the sensible head stood it safely.

Wonderful dreams had Grace Seymour of future usefulness. She was going to do so much in the world. Her heart ached so sometimes for all the misery she saw about her. But she would do all she could now, and then in the future, when she was rich and famous, so her influence could tell in the world, why, how much she could do. If she were rich, really wealthy, she would use her wealth as she believed God

meant it to be used to help His poor, working with the Elder Brother, indeed touching that divine heart through ministry to the least of his little ones. Ah! Grace Seymour dreamed wonderful dreams the while she lived her happy life of useful, hopeful labor—happy in her freedom, happy in the good it was in her power to do, happy in her brother's watchful love, for he surrounded her with the tenderness of his love and care, trying to supply in his own person the mother love and the fatherly protection she had lost—happy in the ambitious plans for the future, for Mozart or Beethoven could not have had a greater love and delight for their profession than she did—happy in her journeying toward the enchanted castle gates that crown our western sky when we are only eighteen.

Well, Grace was nearly nineteen when she had a new pupil. There was nothing uncommon in that; she had new pupils very often. But its after consequences proved this to be an uncommon one. When she went to give Ethel Wilton her first lesson, as teacher and pupil passed into the best parlor, where the piano stood, they found a beautiful little boy, perhaps two and a half years old, with the gorgeously-bound album in his hands, turning the leaves with moist fingers, uttering the while exclamations of satisfaction, while seated at his feet, looking on with silent admiration, as became her sex, was a little four-year-old girl.

It was a wonderfully pretty picture, so Grace thought. But Ethel, in the wisdom of her fourteen years, thought otherwise.

"Oh, those awful children! How did they get here?"

She wrenched the album out of the little fingers so suddenly, that the wide-open baby eyes winked and then looked their pathetic surprise, as if a whirlwind was passing over it. But the little girl, like Rachel, "lifted up her voice and wept." Ethel commanded them to go back to the nursery at once, explaining to Grace, at the same time, that they were brother Lawrence's children, his wife was dead, and he had

brought them for his mother to take care of, and they "were an awful bother." Ethel bustled out to find the nurse; and hand in hand the babies were passing out of the room, discomfited and unhappy, when Grace impulsively caught up the little boy in her arms and sank down, holding him to her heart, while she drew her arm round the little girl, and kissed away the falling tears.

GRACE AND THE CHILDREN.

And, at that very moment, the door opened, and Lawrence Wilton came in. He had heard the lamentation of the little girl as he came in from his office, and had hastened to her relief.

Lawrence Wilton couldn't forget that first look, the kind arms thrown around the baby form so dear to him, the fresh, sweet, girlish lips that were showering consoling kisses on the face of his little motherless girl. And Grace, looking up, blushed under the grateful, admiring eyes of the handsome young man. And the baby stretched out his dimpled hands, and

welcomed his father in the unwritten dialect of babyhood; and the little girl toddled up to him, and cried, "Papa!" And Ethel came in and introduced her brother, and the nurse removed the children, and Lawrence Wilton went out, and his heart remained. Of course, you all know how it ended. Why should I insult your penetration by piling on words? Of course they were married, and of course Mrs. Grundy said, "What a wonderful thing Grace has done. How did she ever happen to catch him?" Talking, as usual, as if the female sex were roaring lions, going about seeking innocent lambs of men, that they might devour them. But Grace did not care much about what gossips might say of her, for she was happy. With her whole woman heart, her generous, uncalculating, impulsive heart, she worshiped her handsome lover husband. He was to her the one man in the world. She had looked forward to a glorious career for herself, to the delight, the unspeakable delight of cultivating to the utmost the grand, beautiful gift that she knew God had given her. She had set her heart upon all this, and had decided that nothing should come between her and this future. But when she loved, she drowned all these glowing ambitions in the most royal wine of love. She forsook her past dreams, burned her ships behind her, and, with all the ardor and enthusiasm of her nature, she lived only for her husband, for his happiness, for his advancement. And for all these losses, these thwarted ambitions, the love and tenderness of this one man fully rewarded her. For nothing suits a woman better than to be a slave to the one she loves, if her gaoler be true and tender. And so their blissful wedding tour was through Paradise; for surely it was not the White Mountains they were journeying over, but the mountains of the blest.

She has been married eight years now; and, as she sits there at the breakfast-table, you would scarcely recognize, in the pale, spiritless, unhappy face, the bright, laughing-eyed Grace Seymour. What has wrought this strange transformation? Perhaps the reader may be

better able to form an opinion for himself, if I should relate the conversation that has passed between her husband and herself at the breakfast table this morning.

"Mrs. Wilton, I will thank you to give me your attention." The tone was very abrupt and domineering, and Mrs. Wilton raised her pale face from the still paler face of the little invalid boy beside her at the table. She was fastening a napkin around his neck more securely. Little Robbie had been an invalid since his second year, caused by a fall from a carriage.

"Very well, Lawrence, I am listening."

"It is a very disagreeable habit of yours, Mrs. Wilton, when I am talking, to divide your attention between me and the children."

There was a peculiar emphasis on the *I*, when "*I* am talking," that gave one the impression that *I* was of paramount consequence in the speaker's own estimation.

"I don't mean to be rude, Lawrence, but Robbie needs a great deal of attention."

"You are making a perfect baby of him. There is no need of your fussing over him as you do from morning till night, and from night till morning."

Mrs. Wilton's sensitive lips quivered, and it seemed a great effort to keep back her tears; in fact, she was nervous and low-spirited this morning. She had not slept hardly any all night before, taking care of little Robbie. His fall had injured his spine, and at times he was a great sufferer, and required constant attention. Her husband had occupied a separate room, and so had slept well all night; and his handsome face was bright, and he looked refreshed and rested—a great contrast to the tired, pale face opposite to him.

"Robbie had a very bad night, Lawrence."

"Yes, that is the old story, the old complaint. I am tired of hearing it."

There was a boy of perhaps fourteen years at the table; and at this remark of Mr. Wilton he looked up quickly with flashing eyes, and seemed about to speak. But Mrs. Wilton spoke before he had an opportunity. Her voice was low and gentle. But a close observer could discover, in the inflection of her voice, a hopelessness and a despairing tone that were very pathetic. But her words were commonplace.

"I didn't mean to complain, Lawrence. I had no thought of it."

"No, I dare say not." His tone was sneering now, and very insulting. "Of course not. You never complain. But we have wasted time enough on what is of no consequence. I was about to tell you, when you made this important digression in the conversation, that my cousin, Beatrice Manning, Harley's half sister, is coming to stay a month with us, and I want you to see that everything is done for her comfort."

The tone in which he spoke made it a command, instead of a request. But she only replied, in even tones:

"Very well, Lawrence."

"I want everything done that is possible to make her stay pleasant. She is the most beautiful and attractive woman I have ever met, without any exception."

Mrs. Wilton here bent very low over little Robbie, giving him some small attention, and did not reply to this.

"I wish, Mrs. Wilton, it were possible for you to copy a little of her ease and brilliancy of appearance. But—" Here he laughed a very disagreeable laugh—"it is impossible to make an eagle out of a ground bird."

Mrs. Wilton did not reply to this short lesson on natural philosophy. But Harley Manning, aged fifteen, age of chivalry, spoke up impetuously:

"Cousin Grace is ten times as good as Bee. Bee is good and generous by spells; but she is selfish as she can be most all the time, and flirts outrageously, mamma says. And Cousin Grace is good and

patient and sweet all the time. She is doing good for some one all the while."

Mr. Wilton did not make any reply to Harley's words, but he gave him a look that made him feel younger and of less consequence than he had ever felt before. But he turned to his wife and said, with a mocking smile:

"I congratulate you, Mrs. Wilton, on having such a champion."

Little Kate, who made the fifth at the breakfast-table, and who had taken no part in the conversation as yet, now turned the subject very opportunely by asking her father the question that was of most importance in her mind.

There was a charitable institution in the city that was doing a vast amount of good. It was the Fold of the Good Shepherd, and many wandering and homeless lambs had found shelter and safety within its walls. But the past winter had been a very severe one, and the funds of the society were running low, and the ladies of the city had been very active in devising ways to get money. Even the children had become interested in the good work, and a series of children's parties had been organized to raise money to carry on the work. Kate wanted to give the next party, and her mother too was anxious to have her do so; for her husband, although he was now wealthy, never gave her any money, only what would barely supply her necessities; and so, with her warm and generous heart and her quick sympathies, she could give nothing in charity herself. This was one of the greatest trials of her life to tender-hearted Grace; but she could only endure, and let her heart ache over the woes and wants she could not relieve.

But she thought if Kate could give this party, that would be helping some; and she was willing and glad to take upon herself all the added care and labor it would bring for the sake of the good it would accomplish. But Kate was used to rebuffs from her father, and she asked the question rather timidly.

"Father, can I have a party here to-morrow? All the girls are having them. It is to get money to help the poor children."

"Nonsense! If everybody took care of their families as I do, there wouldn't be any poor children."

"Mamma said I might have one, if you were willing."

"It is very injudicious in your mother to raise your expectations concerning anything of the kind. Your mother seems to think that I am made of money. I do not choose to have her throw my earnings away at her own pleasure. If any money is given to that institution, I will give it myself in my own way. I detest children's parties, as she well knows. They are perfect nuisances, late hours, and—"

"I thought we would have it in the afternoon, Lawrence," said Mrs. Wilton, gently.

"Yes, and have a flock of children rushing through the house all day, ruining my furniture, and flocking to the supper table, making it impossible for me to think, crazing me with their noise."

"I thought we would have the table set out in the grove for them. I thought they would enjoy it better, and it would keep the house quiet, so as not to disturb you."

"You have an excellent faculty, Mrs. Wilton, for making everything appear smooth and as if your way was the best. But, unfortunately, your labor is wasted in this case, for there will be no party given."

Here Kate left the table in tears, seeing which, Mrs. Wilton ventured to remonstrate with her husband, but in vain; the mandate had gone forth, the king had spoken. And taking his hat and cane, emblems of his sovereign dignity, Mr. Wilton left the house for his office, followed by his young clerk, who could only look his pity for her. You think there are few Mr. Wiltons? I think so myself. But few are needed in the world, it seems to me, as he was at that stage of his life. But then, Mr. Wilton had his redeeming qualities. He was respected

by his fellow-townsmen. He stood high in community as a man who had fought his way up from the masses to an honorable position among men. He stood now at the head of his profession, was much sought for in difficult cases, and could command almost any price for his services. And, in speaking of his upward progress, so rapid for the last few years, they never thought of awarding any praise for his success to the pale, quiet little woman who had borne all the burdens she could take upon her shoulders to spare him, who had denied herself all freedom that he might be free, who had gone shabbily dressed in their darker days that he might be well dressed, who had been nurse-maid, house-maid, seamstress, and cook to save expense, who had taken all the care of his invalid child upon herself that his mind might be fresh and bright, who had laid aside her own ambition, her own enthusiastic dreams of future fame, the dear art that had seemed almost a part of her life, to live only for him, for his success, his advancement.

She had denied herself all ease and means of culture, till her naturally bright mind had grown rusty and dull, as she couldn't help seeing herself, and the dull, heavy weight at her heart seemed to drag her senses down. The roses had all faded from her cheeks and the brightness from her eyes. She was the saddest sight beneath the sweet heavens — an unloved wife; and, unfortunately, she worshiped her handsome husband still; for, if she could have disliked him or been indifferent to him, his coldness and harshness would not have cut her so to the heart.

Now that he had achieved success, was a great man, the doors of great houses were thrown open to him. And when brilliant, showy women smiled upon him and petted him, he would contrast them, in his own mind, with the pale, spiritless, faded woman at his own hearth; and I think, although he would not own it to himself, probably, still I think he thought it was very good and praiseworthy in him not to get a divorce from her. But he showed in every possible way, except telling

her in plain words, how deeply he felt her inferiority to him. He showed his impatience and indifference in every act; and little Kate—for children are quick to receive impressions—she followed her father's example in too many cases, making Mrs. Wilton's burdens still heavier and harder to endure.

Beatrice Manning came at the time appointed, and she found everything about the house in the perfection of order. And if she thought for the first two days that her cousin's wife was rather dull and spiritless, she could certainly find no fault with her reception of her and the unvarying and constant attention she received from her.

Beatrice Manning was a very brilliant woman, one who had great beauty and great personal magnetism. She had counted her lovers by the score. Indians when returning from a successful raid upon neighboring tribes, bear suspended from their belts the scalps of their victims, trophies of their triumphs and victories. Had Beatrice Manning hung the scalps of her victims upon her belt when she pierced their hearts, it would have been a sight to see. Locks of all colors would have mingled together, from the ruddy gold of the sanguine and susceptible to the deep raven of the more sombre temperament, passing through all the intermediate shades of brown. Gray locks and not a few venerable bald heads would have appeared there, bearing honorable witness to youthfulness of heart accompanying aged heads. She was not a bad woman at all—indeed, was one who had good impulses of the heart. But ever since strangers had stopped her nurse in the street to admire her in long clothes, she had been admired and flattered, until it had come to be her daily bread, the staff of life to her. She was not a happy woman, with all her conquests and social victories. There was too much natural nobility in her nature to make her wholly satisfied with the life she led. Her fortune had been told her by a sad-eyed sibyl in Italy the year before. It said "she was doomed to a grand future, fame, and a sad heart."

She never saw the fortune-teller again, a strolling gypsy; but about a week later she accepted an offer of marriage from a man old enough to be her father, a man whose only attractions were his wealth, his title, and his high station in society.

TELLING HER FORTUNE.

At her request the engagement was kept a secret, and she still queened it in society with a high hand. She loved to see men at her feet, to see them pass through all the stages of the *grande* passion, from the foolishly-sentimental to the high tragic. Without meaning any particular harm, she was one of the women who would flirt with her grandfather, and turn his venerable head, if no more eligible specimen of manhood were available.

Just now it amused her to see how completely her cousin, Lawrence Wilton, was under her

influence. His business had made it necessary for him to be a good deal in her native town, which caused him to see very much of her. It was since his cousin's return from Europe, and he had been thrown so much in her society, that he had treated his wife with more cruel indifference and coldness than ever before. Since his mind had taken that very dangerous route of thought, what it would have been to have this brilliant, fascinating beauty forever by his side, his wife, how he would be envied by all. I think this was the most of his thought—what a sensation she would create, what an honor she would reflect upon him; for, beneath all the rubbish of unworthy thought and deed that was piled above it, the man did have still, deep down in his heart, a love for his wife. But the door was hidden, and a stone was rolled against it. No glimpse of it could the pale, unhappy woman see during the weeks after Beatrice Manning came to be an inmate of their dwelling.

What she suffered in those weeks only He can tell to whom she carried her aching heart, at whose feet she tried to lay her burdens down, to see the man she worshiped so blindly and utterly lavishing upon another the attentions that should have been her own, to see him bend entranced over the piano while Beatrice sang, to see his fine eyes light up with admiring appreciation at her bright sallies of wit, to see him watch the proud, queenly figure with his soul in his eyes, as he used to look at her in the far-away days of their courtship; and then, when his glance chanced to rest upon her, to see the look of dissatisfaction in his eyes, the slight, scornful frown, or the cold indifference.

Had it not been for little Robbie in those days I think Grace would have prayed to die. But he needed her. He seemed growing weaker as the warm days grew on, and the doctor shook his head gravely, and hinted of heart disease, when Grace sent for him one day after Robbie had had a very bad night. Grace had buried two little ones of her own, and Robbie, dear, patient little Robbie, must she give him up, too? Not

if the most devoted love and care could save him. So she bore her burdens silently; and if Beatrice guessed all of them, it was due to her own penetration, for the patient, sweet face of her cousin's wife never changed to her for a moment, only it grew paler every day. But she was always kind, considerate, and gentle, and not a task was omitted, not a duty was neglected, not an effort neglected to make Beatrice's stay pleasant to her. But the four weeks rolled away at last, as all days will, whether leaden or rosy-hued, and the day came for Beatrice to go. There was to be a grand picnic at the lake, some dozen miles away, and from there Beatrice was to go home with some lady friend who lived near the lake for a few days, and from thence to her own home. Grace excused herself from going, for Robbie was not nearly so well. Her husband did not seem displeased with the determination. When Beatrice parted with her hostess, Grace was calm and quiet and gentle as ever; but Beatrice threw her arms around her neck impulsively, and kissed her again and again; and, as she lifted her face, there were tears softening her large dark eyes. What thoughts had come to her at that parting she herself knew, but no one else at that time, for she said nothing. But it was in the afternoon of that day, she was sitting alone in a cedar-shadowed nook by the silent water. She had wandered away from the gay crowd, for she wanted to be alone. She was in one of her softened moods, one could see, as she sat there with her hands clasped over her knees, and her large, dark, troubled eyes looking outward over the waste of waters. Perhaps she was thinking of what the sad-eyed gypsy woman had foretold of her future, "doomed to a grand future, fame, and a sad heart." Perhaps she was thinking of the frivolity and selfishness of her life, lived only for selfish purposes, and comparing it with a nobler life, unselfish, patient, Christ-like, a life given for others. But through whatever ideal world her thoughts were roaming, they were quickly recalled to the actual, the present, by a voice at her side.

"Beatrice, I have been looking for you."

"Well, cousin Lawrence, you have found me, it seems."

He sat down by her side, on the green moss carpet. "Haven't you been lonely here by yourself?"

"No, I am never lonely when alone. I think it is a very poor compliment to one's self to be lonesome when you are alone."

"You are different from any one else. There is no one like you." His tone and glance were exceedingly lover-like.

"That is a doubtful compliment, cousin Lawrence." She spoke lightly; for, however she delighted to tread on men's hearts, to witness her power over them, she had too much self-respect to allow a married man to make love to her in plain terms. But Lawrence went on, speaking rapidly.

"You must know what I mean, Beatrice, when I say there is no other woman like you. How am I to live without you? When I compare you, in my own mind, to the woman I am bound to, it half crazes me with regret."

Half-crazed, indeed, he must have been, or he would never have dared to speak thus to Beatrice Manning; for, as he went on with his wild words, speaking of his wife and of her, she sprang to her feet.

"How dare you! How dare you speak so to me?" And then her great flashing eyes looked through his very soul, it seemed to him, as she went on; for Beatrice was in one of her heroic moods, when she forgot herself and the world.

"Lawrence Wilton, I have wanted to have a plain talk with you. But perhaps I should never have told you what was in my heart had not you dared to insult me by telling me that you loved me—you, a married man! I pass over the insult to myself, which you will never have an opportunity to repeat, cousin Lawrence; for my betrothed husband sails from England to-morrow, and in two months I return with him, and our

paths will never cross again. I pass over the insult to myself. But, my God! to think of your treatment of that angel, your wife. I have been thinking of her all day, of her beautiful life of duty, so perfectly and patiently performed, of her gentle patience, her Christ-like forbearance and long-suffering. You say, to compare her with me makes you wild with regret. Do you know that when I compare myself with her it makes me wild with regret and remorse. How mean my empty, frivolous, butterfly life looks in comparison with her self-sacrificing noble one. Her silent example has preached to me as no sermon ever did. She has made me a better woman just to know her for one month. She is an angel, Lawrence Wilton, and you are a villain to treat her as you do."

PLAIN TALK.

Never, from opposing lawyer did Lawrence Wil-

ton listen to plainer truths, spoken in plainer language. He turned pale to his lips, and once or twice made a gesture as if to interrupt her; but, as well might you endeavor to stay a mountain torrent as to check her impetuous speech.

"If she is faded, spiritless, emotionless, as you say, whose work is it, I would like to know. I saw her picture, painted the year before you married her. Look at her face as she looks there, and see if that is 'faded, spiritless, washed-out.' It is beautiful, radiant with hope and ambition, and intelligence; and, if all that happiness has faded from her face, whose work is it? Ask your own conscience. She has given her life for you and yours, thrown aside entirely her own individuality, her hopes of advancement in her own sphere of ambition. I have heard of her bright promise from one who knew her well. She gave up all her personal ambition, and lived only for your happiness, for your advancement, took the care of your motherless children, little feeble Robbie upon herself, saved you from all household annoyances and vexations that might distract your attention, took all your burdens upon herself, so you could be free and rise upward, has done the work two women ought not to have done, has been nurse, household drudge, seamstress, and cook; and has borne all her cares and toil and your coldness and indifference with an almost heavenly patience and forbearance. And yet, after she has wasted all the freshness and the beauty of her life upon you, after you have accepted daily the sacrifice of all she is and all she hoped to be, still you dare to say you have grown away from her, and taunt her with her inferiority, when, if you were not blinder than a mole, you could see that she is as much above you as an angel is above a human being. Go home, sir, and try to atone for the evil you have done her, if you can. For, I tell you, you are breaking her heart with your coldness and neglect."

"You are mistaken, Beatrice," said Wilton, with white lips, "she is always calm—"

"It is the calmness of despair. Don't imagine I am deceived. A woman's heart can read a woman's heart. She worships you like a demigod, and I tell you you are killing her with your neglect and indifference. And I despise myself when I think that I, in my wicked vanity, have added to her pain by receiving your attentions, your flatteries? I do despise myself and you."

A sound of gay voices was heard coming nearer; for Beatrice Manning was too bright and particular a star to be missed long without being followed diligently. And, as they approached, her cousin turned and left her without a word; and in a few minutes he pleaded a business engagement, and left the party, and returned home. He wanted to be alone, he wanted to think. Could there be any truth in what Beatrice had said? Was he breaking his wife's heart? How Beatrice had talked to him! He thought he hated her as he recalled her cutting, passionate words. A villain she had called him. And then he compared her angry, flashing eyes with the eyes in which he had never seen an angry gleam. But he had seen sadness there. He had called her spiritless and dull. Was it because her heart was breaking, through his neglect?

"She worships you like a demigod." In all the sorrow of his awakened remorse, the man's vanity was pleased with this. He would repay her for this devotion; he would reward her for the long suffering he had caused her; he would be gentle and tender to her henceforth, the patient wife, the dear wife. For the man's love, that was not dead, but had been sleeping, was now awakened.

He reached home at twilight. The one servant met him at the garden gate breathless, running for dear life.

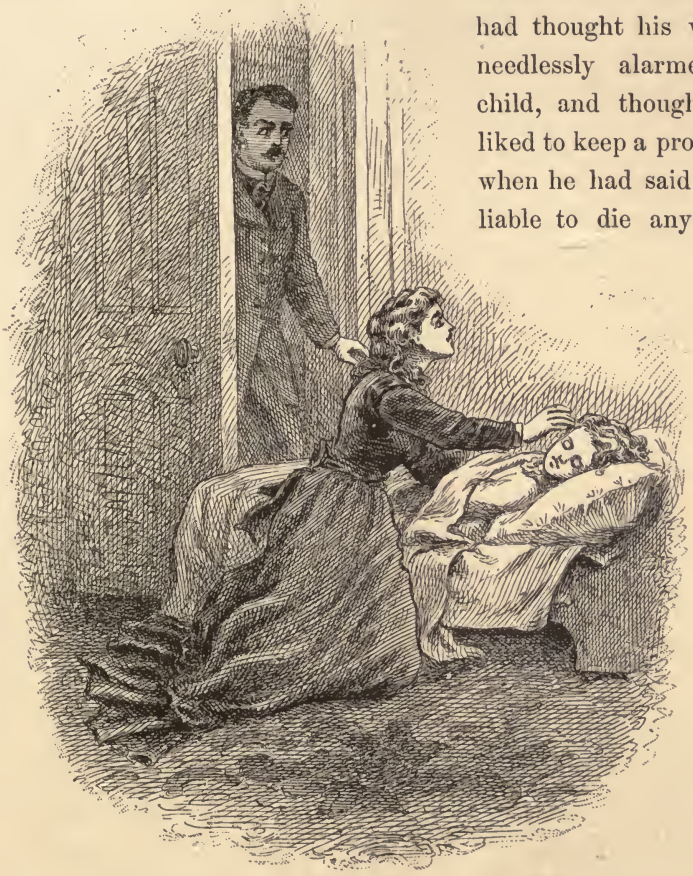
"Master Robbie it is who is gone, sure."

"Gone? What do you mean?" said he, taking her by the arm.

"And it is dead he is, for sure, and the mistress is raving crazy. Shall I go for the doctor?"

"Yes, go."

And the conscience-smitten man dropped her arm, and flew, rather than ran, to the house, through the open hall door, up the long flight of stairs into Robbie's room. He had thought his wife had been needlessly alarmed about the child, and thought the doctor liked to keep a profitable patient, when he had said the child was liable to die any moment with heart disease.



"LET ME GO WITH YOU."

But now, should he never see his boy's sweet eyes again, never hear him say "Papa."

Before he reached the room he heard his wife's voice. He opened the door, and saw her kneeling by Robbie's bed, bending over the still, white, beautiful face that lay upon the pillow so motionless.

"Why didn't you take me with you, little Robbie? Wasn't there

room up there for me, or don't they want a breaking heart there in the happy home? Let me go with you, little one. Mamma's own boy that loved her. No one to love mamma now, no one. You have left her alone! alone! alone!"

Her voice rose now in a shrill shriek. Lawrence Wilton went to her and tried to take in his the hands that were lifted up so despairingly. But with the strength of insanity she tore them away from him, and, springing to her feet, she confronted him.

"Who are you that have come to take away my child? I know who you are. You are my husband's ghost. I know you. You have come here into my home, have stood here freezing me to death with your cold glances, your cold heart, mocking me with your cold, sneering words. What have you done with my husband? You have stolen him, and you are his ghost. Don't you touch me! Go! go!"

Her eyes were ablaze with frenzy. "Now you want to steal my boy from me. You have stolen my husband's love, took him from me, took my happiness, my life away. But you shall not have my child." And she threw herself down on the bed, and clasped the dead boy to her heart. And so the doctor found them. A deep stupor followed the wild delirium, and she lay for days unconscious, while Lawrence Wilton repentant, broken-hearted, followed little Robbie to the grave, and bent over the white, still form, that lay like death in life, unconscious of the too late love that showered kisses on the closed eyes and white cheeks and lips, unconscious of the burning tears that wet her face, unconscious of the wild prayers breathed by her couch that God would let her live, would give him a chance to atone for the past.

Mrs. Wilton came back slowly, very slowly from the valley of the shadow of death. And what were the first words that she said to her husband, who was kneeling by her side, kissing her brow, her cheeks, her lips with more than the old lover fondness? Was it some deep thought born of the solemn places in which her feet had been treading?

Was it some question of great moment concerning human affairs, of the world she had so nearly left forever, of the unknown realm she had drawn so near? No, it was this, the first thought in her woman's heart, and her voice was so faint and low that he could scarcely hear it:

"Then you do love me, Lawrence? I was mistaken. You do love me still."

"Better than life, my darling, my patient angel wife."

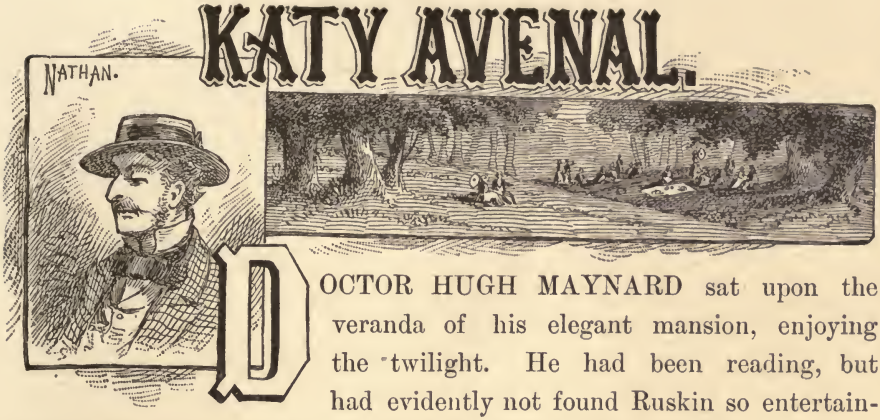
"Then I am glad to live. I wanted to die; for I was tired out."

"It was my cruelty, my wicked coldness and neglect that tired you. You must live. God will not be so unmerciful as to take you till I win your forgiveness, by doing all that man can do to atone for the past, by showing you what love, and care, and tenderness mean. I never knew what you were to me till I thought I was losing you. Then I found what life would be without you."

As she listened to his words there was a smile of perfect content upon her face. And, in the coming years, the face of the "charming, bright little woman, Mrs. Wilton," as she was called by her husband's friends, wore the same sunny smile, the sunshine of her heart. Queen of her husband's heart, enthroned in his love, she envies not Beatrice Manning, the wife of a titled millionaire, brilliant, beautiful, and admired, "doomed to a grand future, fame, and a sad heart."

"THERE SHE IS."

KATY AVENAL.



DOCTOR HUGH MAYNARD sat upon the veranda of his elegant mansion, enjoying the twilight. He had been reading, but had evidently not found Ruskin so entertaining as his own thoughts; for the book had fallen to his feet, and, with his hands clasped behind his head, he was leaning back in the most luxurious of attitudes, and, judging from his countenance, in the most peaceful of moods.

It was a good-looking face, with noble rather than handsome features; grave, earnest, blue eyes; brown hair and moustache, and long, sweeping beard of the same color. You would not judge him, from his face, to be particularly brilliant — and you would be right. But you would be certain that he was a very good man — a man that had a true and sweet nature, and had lived a pure and noble life — and you would be right in that. He had had rather a hard life hitherto, but in the conflict he had not strangled his better nature, as so many do. He loved beauty, heroism, goodness; and he not only loved them, but sought after them. He was a very affectionate man, too; a true, tender heart beat in the breast of Dr. Hugh Maynard, bachelor, aged thirty-eight.

Perhaps the adjectives — tender, affectionate — may seem strange as applied to a man who had reached this mature age without having formed a real, heart-felt attachment for any woman. But I steadfastly believe that tenderness and affection are not alone displayed in caresses and passionate vows. Affection is sometimes, and more worthily, shown in good, earnest labor — solid blows of the axe and hammer. Self-denying labor for those who are dependent.

And Hugh Maynard, having had a pretty tough hand-to-hand encounter with poverty and a poor practice to support a widowed mother and a younger brother, had really and truly not had time to fall in love. His mother had died about a year previous, and Hugh mourned her sincerely. But, poor lady, her whole life had been a sort of fretful, complaining war with fate, although her son had sacrificed much for her sake, and had striven to surround her with all the happiness and comfort it was in his power to bestow upon her. Still "life and fate had been very cruel to her." That was her belief, in life and in death — a belief so thoroughly incorporated into her daily life that it could not possibly conduce to the comfort and cheerfulness of those about her. But let us hope that in that sphere into which she entered she found peace. As we said, Hugh mourned her sincerely — much more than Master Tom, who had been his mother's idol, for the reason that his nature was deeper. And it was a necessity of that nature to love something. He could no more help pouring out the wealth of his affection and tenderness upon some object than a river can help flowing onward. Maybe the river — as it washes desert coasts and bleak, rocky mountain-sides — holds in its heart dreams of a possible sweeter pathway, star-glinted forests and mossy meadows. There is a love that is a sort of torture — that receives everything and returns nothing. And it maybe that poor Dr. Hugh, when he found that his tenderness and his earnest efforts failed to bring any visible returns of either affection or content, some-

times thought what love might be to him — life's crowning blessing and delight. At such times, I suppose, his heart grew very sad and heavy, and I suppose that he took hold of his life's work with more energy than before, determined to do his duty, at least, whether happiness was to be his or not.

A few months previous to the date of our story a distant relative died, leaving Hugh sole heir to a fabulous sum in bank stock, railroad shares, and this fine estate in the country. The only reason Hugh could assign, in his mental gropings, toward what could possibly have been the reason of his being the fortunate heir, was that he had not worried the life out of the rich old man by attentions and flatteries, but had simply treated the old gentleman respectfully and minded his own business. And to mind one's own business is so seldom done in this strange world that I think it is richly worth a hundred thousand dollars, and I am sincerely glad that Dr. Hugh received it.

ROB.

As we said, he was sitting beneath his shady portico, in the twilight of the fourth day after his arrival in his new home, enjoying a not unpleasant reverie, when he suddenly became conscious of two figures approaching him through the drooping elms that bordered the avenue. One was a tall figure, enwrapped with dignity as a garment. The other was a small boy, bare-footed, and crowned with an exceedingly disreputable hat. As they approached nearer, the small figure slunk modestly in the background; but the tall one advanced boldly, for he was the man-servant of Mrs. Judge Buncome, and he felt that he bore upon his own shoulders the Buncome

dignity — and that was a great weight, I can assure you; a smaller man might well stagger beneath it. He delivered his message with true composure and pride: —

"Susanna Buncome is taken ill; your presence is required at the residence of Mrs. Judge Buncome, immediately."

"What is the matter with the lady?"

The tall man didn't know, exactly, but thought it was a kind of "runnin'-down;" "the Buncomes have it a good deal."

He said this with an air as if it was very good and condescending in the Buncomes to "rundown," or have any disease whatever.

The doctor assured him that he would come immediately, and he had already turned to go into the house for his hat and other belongings, without looking at or thinking of the other little figure, so completely did the Buncome dignity absorb attention and pervade the atmosphere. But as the tall man departed, with his head well thrown back, and the doctor was also disappearing, his step was arrested by a little, piping voice: —

"The school-ma'am's sick."

At this sudden and startling intelligence Dr. Hugh turned and faced the speaker. It was the small boy, with a keen, blue eye shining out from beneath the torn fringes of that terrible hat brim.

"What did you say, Bub?"

"The school-ma'am's sick — don't you suppose you could come and see her, or somethin'? You are the doctor, haint you?"

"Yes, I am a doctor."

"Well, so I hearn, and I came up here a-purpose."

"Were you sent for me? is the lady very sick?"

"Yes, awful sick! She has had chills and things; has had 'em every day a'most, talkin' everything; scairt me most to death; my room is next to hern, and I can hear her talkin' to her mother, and

lots of dead folks; she is crazy as a loon, an' I think everything in the world of her; an', say, don't you suppose you can go?"

"Were you sent for me?"

"No; as, I say, she don't know me nor anything; and Miss Weskut don't do nothin', only just jaw and scold because she was took sick there. She haint no mother, nor nothin', an' boards round; an', say, don't you suppose you could go?"

This was the pathetic closing of all his remarks; but still Dr. Hugh hesitated: —

"Perhaps there is some other doctor they would prefer to me."

"There haint no other doctor anywhere round, an' I hearn Miss Weskut say this mornin' that the school-ma'am had kept her awake all night a'most, talkin', out of her head, an' if she didn't suppose you would feel too big to come, she should send for you; an' I wish you would go, for the school-ma'am's jest as good to me as anything."

The doctor's face showed plainly that he was deciding to go, as he asked: —

"Are you Mrs. Wescott's son?"

"No; I am only a boy she took; my step-father bound me to her."

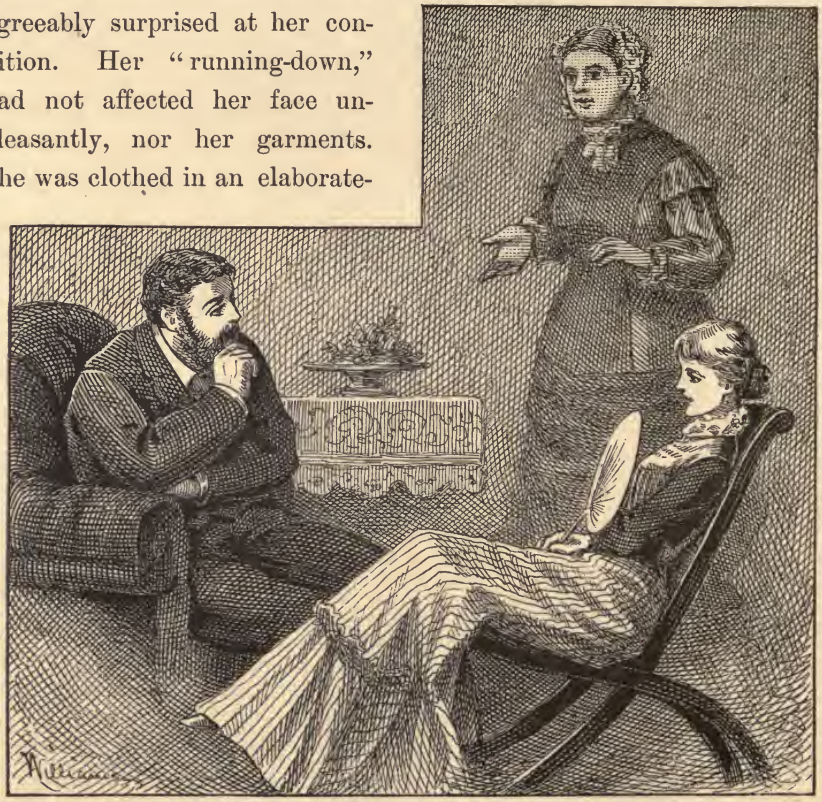
He said this with a melancholy air that proved that the mystic chain wherewith he was bound to his mistress was not a chain of roses. Apparently encouraged by the kind face of his hearer, he went on: —

"We haint neither of us — her nor me — got any mothers nor fathers, nor anything; an' mebby that was what made her always so good to me, or somethin'."

"Very likely," said the doctor. "I will come to Mrs. Wescott's directly after I go to Mrs. Buncome's; I must go there first, because they called me first."

The boy strolled off with his hands in his pockets, seemingly searching their deepest possibilities; and Dr. Hugh proceeded to the stately residence of his most aristocratic neighbor.

When he followed the servant — the identical tall man — into the presence of the invalid, he was agreeably surprised at her condition. Her "running-down," had not affected her face unpleasantly, nor her garments. She was clothed in an elaborate-



"A RUNNIN' DOWN."

ly beflounced and beruffled morning-dress of pale-blue, very becoming to her delicate, rosy complexion; and the easy-chair, in which she was reclining in a very graceful attitude, made her seem still fairer.

She was about sixteen years old, and would have been remark-

ably pretty had it not been for an affected air, which, before the doctor had been in the room five minutes, he had traced back to its true source — her mother. The lady greeted him with great cordiality, yet with Buncome dignity, and took upon herself the labor of conversation. Indeed, the young lady assured him that "it was all her mother's doings — sending for him — for she felt well enough."

"Do not say thus, dear Susanne," said her mother, "expecting me, or Dr. Maynard, with his penetrating, keen eyes (I always did admire penetrating eyes) to believe it. Dear doctor, you don't wonder at my watching her with the falcon gaze of anxiety, do you? She is my only idol left — the one ewe-lamb of her lamented father, Judge Buncome. You will understand, dear doctor, of course, that I speak with poetic and scriptural license, and do not intimate, in the most remote degree, that my husband, the Judge, resembled in any degree a sheep. Anyone who had the privilege of listening to his lion-like conversation might well scoff at such an idea. I only meant to say that she is the hope and pet of the Buncome race, and the only heir to the Buncome estate."

"Indeed!" said Dr. Hugh, because he could think of nothing else to say.

"Yes; her twin and only brother died at his birth. Susanna Maria lived — Samuel Miner died — why, I know not. Fourteen years afterward, my husband, the judge, followed little Samuel Miner, leaving me a broken-hearted woman, and Susanna the heiress to the Buncome estate, which is a very fine one, and joins yours, and has been considered only inferior to that, in the country."

Dr. Hugh did not make any response to this flood of intelligence, although she seemed to pause slightly, as if waiting a reply; but he listened courteously, and she resumed.

"Sweet and lovely as she has always been in disposition, still the care has worn upon me — the care of preserving her health. You

know you are careless, love." (This in reply to a somewhat contemptuous exclamation from the young lady.) "And then, besides her health, the thought of her future has worn upon me. I knew she would be the prey of fortune-hunters." (Another still more impatient gesture from the young lady, answered by: "You know, dear, that fortune-hunters are abroad, and it is useless to deny it. I have thought many a time, doctor, in the lone midnight, that if I could see her united to a good man whom I could trust, and who had wealth of his own, proving conclusively that he sought my sweet child for herself alone, I would be willing to follow little Samuel Miner and the Judge.")

For some half an hour did Dr. Hugh remain in that luxurious apartment, a silent victim to the remarkable conversational powers of the relict of Judge Buncome.

Finally, taking advantage of a temporary lull in the gentle, unceasing shower of words, he made a slight prescription for the daughter, and departed, not, however, without pressing solicitations from the mother "to repeat his call, in a neighborly, if not a professional way, as he was all the neighbor they had — of course she did not reckon the poor people about them as any society for herself or Susanna."

As Dr. Hugh went down the broad walk that led to the highway, he found his young friend of the torn hat-brim perched upon the gate post, like a disreputable statue.

He jumped down, and opened the gate, and, having fastened it, he followed on at the doctor's side.

"I thought I'd tell you not to say nothin' to Miss Weskut about my goin' after you, for like's not she'd be madder than a hen. Couldn't you tell 'em you happened in, or somethin'?"

Here was a new dilemma for our bashful doctor, and he betrayed signs of succumbing to his strong disposition to flee. The small boy saw it, and said, reprovingly: —

"If you only knew how sick she is, and how good she is, you would almost run to get there."

So, guided and encouraged by Rob — this was the boy's name — Doctor Hugh was led toward a dreary-looking farm-house, not far from his own residence through the fields, but about a mile distant by the road.

In the outskirts of the farmyard Rob vanished mysteriously, and the doctor advanced alone, and rapped at the unpainted front door.

Mrs. Wescott soon answered the knock. She was rather of a vine-gar-faced woman, with every hair drawn back tight-ly from her fore-head, as if she was determined that not one hair should escape her venge-ance, but each should be confined in hard, if not soli-tary, confinement in the little knob at the back side of the head, over which lonely for-tress a horn comb mounted guard, like a disconsolate and broken-spirit-ed sentry.

MRS. WESCOTT.

Her lips were thin, and there was an indescribable expression to them, so that you couldn't help thinking that they had been worn away by sharp tones and words, as solid rocks are worn by friction of keen pebbles and the wash of waves.

She looked rather formidable. But, loyal to principle, Doctor Hugh betrayed not Rob, but simply told her in his straightforward way, that he was Dr. Maynard, and hearing that she had a very sick person at her house, he had called to offer his services, if needed.

"Well, she is pretty sick," said Mrs. Wescott; "but we didn't

really make bold to send for you, not knowin' as you would want to go and doctor poor folks; we are keepin' her on charity; and we didn't know as you would doctor anyway, bein' so forehanded."

Dr. Hugh cut short any further gossip concerning himself by saying, pleasantly: —

"I will go and see the patient, if you please."

And Mrs. Wescott, bewailing the fact, self-evident, that "I hain't slicked up a mite to-day," led the way up into a chamber that had evidently had no care for days, unpainted and uncarpeted, and, like all the rest of the surroundings, barren of all beauty.

It was a small room, heated from the low roof, and oppressive with air that seemed as if it might count its age by centuries, and laden with all the various scents of Mrs. Wescott's dinners and her husband's pipes.

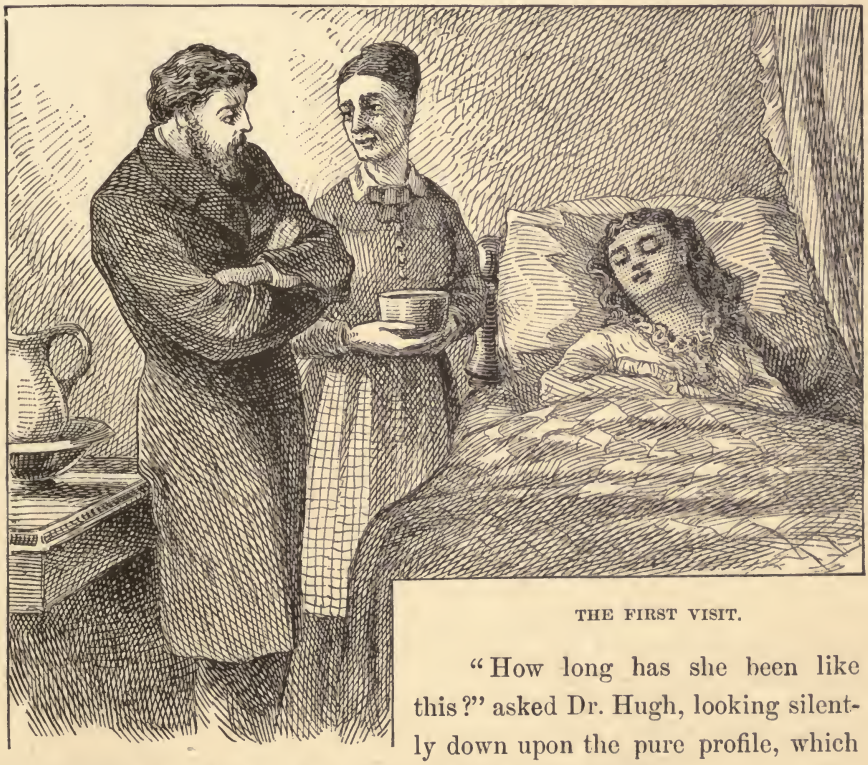
The first move the doctor made on entering this room, was to walk deliberately to the window and raise the sash; he looked round for something to put under it, and took from the table near the window the first thing that presented itself, which was a copy of Mrs. Browning's poems. A pale-blue ribbon fluttered out as he lifted it, and two or three pressed violets, and, as he remorsefully picked them up and laid them on the table, he noticed quite a pile of books, a delicate work-box, and a writing-desk.

Having let in the fresh air, which he evidently considered to be his first duty — and Dr. Hugh was remarkable for always doing the first duty that presented itself — he turned to the bed, which was in a sort of a recess.

There lay the form of his second patient. Quite a contrast to his former one, however — pale as a marble statue lay the face upon the hard, narrow pillow. The eyes were closed, and the dark, clustering hair streamed down in rings and curls over the white neck and shoulders.

She did not notice them in the slightest degree as they entered, and the doctor advanced and took one of the small, delicate hands in his. As he did so, she turned her head wearily, and moaned out: —

"Oh, mother, I am so tired — so tired — so tired!"



THE FIRST VISIT.

"How long has she been like this?" asked Dr. Hugh, looking silently down upon the pure profile, which he thought was the most perfect he had ever beheld.

"Oh, a-goin' on a week."

He looked up quickly at her, and what she saw in his straightforward blue eye led her to exclaim, half apologetically: —

"Oh — that is, she hasn't been so bad as this all the time, she

was only took out of her head last night. I hunched him in the night, and waked him up, and told him he had better go and try to get a doctor, but, good land, he was asleep again in less than no time — I do believe he haint lost an hour's sleep since we were married, and that ——"

"Give me a glass of water, if you please, and a spoon."

Mrs. Wescott hastened to bring the desired articles, and the doctor administered his first medicine to his patient. As he lifted her head to take it, she looked up at him with large dark eyes that recognized nothing, and then closed them again in that stupor that was neither sleeping nor waking, moaning: —

"So tired — so tired!"

And the doctor sat by her, silently, with the white, delicate wrist in his hand, counting the feeble pulses, watching the face so unconscious of his scrutiny.

At bed-time Mrs. Wescott appeared in a stiffly starched gingham dress, ironed for the occasion, and told him that "I will take care of her through the night, with *his* help, though I don't expect much help from him, for of all the sleepy heads I ever see *he* is the sleepiest."

But Dr. Hugh cut short her conjugal revelations by saying, very decidedly: —

"I shall stay here to-night, myself."

And so Dr. Maynard and Mrs. Wescott sat through the long night by the side of unconscious Katy Avenal.

Mrs. Wescott was inclined to be exceedingly loquacious, and, for a time, it must be confessed that the grave doctor encouraged her in it with his interested eyes, for she talked of Katy Avenal. "She never was brought up to work and shirk for herself, and it has come pretty hard on her, though she never complains any. The annuity on which she and her mother has lived, died with her

mother, and so Katy has been obleeged to teach for a living. She is a real good Christian girl as ever lived when she is well, and though it makes it awful hard for me to have her sick here, yet I told him that we wouldn't turn her out-doors anyway, but keep her just through charity. I am jest as willin' to give away the bread of charity as some other folks are that look down on me, and so I have told him many a time."

It may be as Dr. Hugh looked down upon the white face he thought that Mrs. Wescott's bread of charity had not proven very nourishing; but if he thought so, he intimated nothing of the kind, and so the long night wore away.

Twice during the night did Dr. Hugh think that his patient was passing from him, from a world that had been hard to her, into that other world whose bread, once eaten, leaves no room for any future hunger.

"Mother, oh, mother! so tired — so tired."

When she spoke at all, through the night, this was her low, weary moan.

Would, indeed, that mother-hand, haply reaching down from the land of pure delight to clasp the poor, tired little hand in hers, prove stronger than his hand of flesh? And before morning dawned this question had become of wonderful import to our grave doctor.

It was a hard struggle that — between life and death — for days and days. Life conquered, and Katy Avenal came slowly back from the valley of the shadow of death. Came back into a world which was not the old world at all. Where had that old world gone — that great, empty, lonesome world that had held only herself and her care and sorrow?

It had swung off into space unknown, and it was a beautiful, tender, blessed old world into which she had been translated.

She soon got able to be down-stairs in the square room, as Mrs.

Wescott designated her parlor. And day by day Dr. Hugh could see the color coming into the waxen cheeks, and a brighter light in the soft-brown eyes. It was a process that interested Dr. Hugh wonderfully; his visits at Mrs. Wescott's became still more frequent after his professional services were no longer required. There was always some excuse: a book from his library that he wanted her to read, or some new rare flower just blossomed in the conservatory or garden that he must needs carry to show her, or some bunch of white or purple grapes that was safe for her to eat. He wanted her to be very careful about eating fruit. Of course, he knew, as a doctor, what she could partake of with safety, and so, to be certain that she did herself no harm, he kept her supplied with the rarest and ripest.

Oh "square room" of the Wescott farm-house! blessed beyond other rooms wert thou in the eyes of Dr. Hugh Maynard, aged thirty-eight! Thither also sojourned with him, after a time, his brother Tom, when released from college on his first vacation.

Katy was not only very sweet, and loving and beautiful, but she had a great fund of quiet humor. And young Tom found her society extremely fascinating. So did his brother.

Tom compared in his mind her fresh wild-rose loveliness, with the professor's bony daughters — the only females he had been accustomed to seeing — and his heart beat more rapidly beneath his shining vest; she being a few years older than himself only added to her charms. For Tom's mind at this time was in the state usual to nineteen years.

Between the careless flowery path of boyhood, and the calm region of manhood, there is an intermediate realm, paved thoroughly with self-conceit, a realm of hair oil, and gushing, though fickle, admiration for the opposite sex; but above all, and beneath all, matchless assurance and wisdom beyond all wisdom of later years. Tom Maynard was journeying through this realm.

Katy Avenal talked very freely to Tom, for he amused her, and it was very easy to talk to him. But somehow she grew shy of Dr. Hugh; she could meet the assured, complacent gallantry of Tom, and the admiring looks of this noble being laughingly and carelessly; but one glance from Dr. Hugh's earnest blue eyes would set her heart a-tremble just like a bird in the hand of its captor.

Rather queer, wasn't it? but I am only a chronicler, and never had the most remote idea of setting up for a philosopher and accounting for strange things.

So the days dropped off, one by one, from the hand of time; priceless jewels, myriad-hued; dark to the sorrowing, light to the joyful. And to Katy they were beautiful, wondrous days; only one trouble disquieted her.

She could resume her teaching soon, it was true, and could then faithfully repay all her debts, but in the meantime she must eat Mrs. Wescott's "bread of charity."

Now the bread of charity must needs be unpleasant, even if mixed with the milk of kindness and the leaven of love; but Mrs. Wescott's contained neither of these ingredients — it was very dry and very bitter. But Katy, through hard necessity, ate it, and obtained from it what nourishment she might.

It might be that Dr. Hugh, who thought of a good many things, divined the cause of the shadow he sometimes saw on Katy's brow.

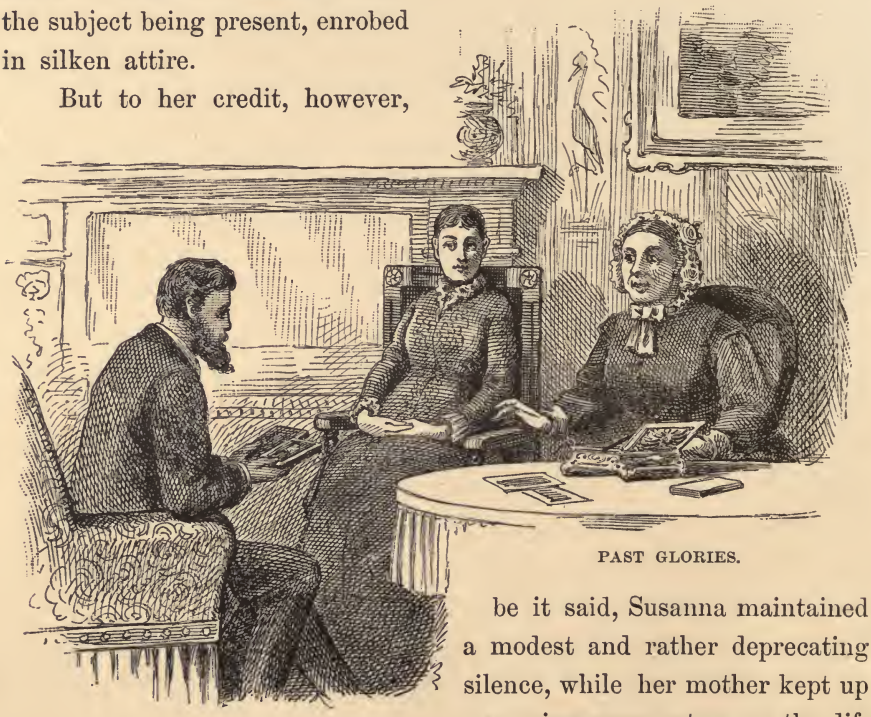
At any rate, one day Katy received a letter containing a bank note of fifty dollars. It said simply that "it came from a friend." She thought it came from some friend of her mother's and received it, and used it as sent of God. One of the first uses she devoted it to was paying Dr. Maynard's rather slender bill, and as he saw that she was so very earnest in the matter he accepted it composedly.

Dr. Hugh was soon called again to Mrs. Judge Buncome's. This time it was the mother who had an attack of "running down," so preva-

lent in the Buncome constitutions. She was well enough to talk.

After a recapitulation of her symptoms, from which he did not apprehend a fatal termination, she waxed confidential, and taking an ivory box from the mantel, she showed him photographs of Susanna, taken in different stages of life, the subject being present, enrobed in silken attire.

But to her credit, however, be it said, Susanna maintained a modest and rather deprecating silence, while her mother kept up a running commentary on the different pictures, as Dr. Hugh faithfully examined them, he did everything faithfully that he undertook.



PAST GLORIES.

"Susanna, as an infant sucking her thumb, who would think, in gazing on the picture of infantile innocence, that she would ever live to be a companion to such a mind as Judge Buncome's? My husband, the judge, died when Susanna was fourteen; but she would converse with him, even at that age, oh, so wisely."

"Susanna as a cherub child of two."

"Susanna as a mirthful image of joy at five. At this age, you will observe the cherub, but rather fleshy, lineaments of childhood begin to give place to the noble Buncome features."

"Susanna in a playful mood, holding her kitten."

"Susanna upon her father's knee, clinging, with one waxen thumb, to her pa's watch chain, which was presented to my husband, Judge Buncome, by a grateful client of the judge's."

"Susanna as a school-girl, clasping a Latin grammar in one hand and a bunch of flowers in the other, sweetly descriptive of her nature, which was both solid and flowery."

"Susanna as a graduate, in her snowy muslin dress and blue sash, in which she delivered her original and celebrated effort on the "Pleasures of Spring."

Lost in contemplation of these pictures of Susanna and the judge, Mrs. Buncome soared aloft, with an atmosphere of pure gentility. Reminiscences of past glory and greatness dawned upon her vision like the spires of distant cities to an æronaut.

Dr. Hugh listened respectfully, till she descended into the present, and, taking up a small vignette, the last of the list, she exclaimed, rapturously:

"Susanna as at present, in her sweet maidenhood."

And then, holding the picture out at arm's length, to obtain a better view, she said, pensively:

"What innocence and modesty sits enthroned upon that brow! How beautiful innocence and modesty are,—are they not, dear Doctor?"

"Dr. Hugh, appealed to thus directly, replied, "they are."

"Yes, and my Susanna has always possessed them in so eminent a degree, that it pains me the more keenly to behold a lack of them in others. How is that Miss Avenal?"

"She is gaining strength slowly."

"Yes, and isn't it terrible there are such stories about her?"

"What stories?" said Dr. Hugh, with a sudden expression darkening his eyes that Mrs. Buncome had never beheld in them before.

"Why, they say — they say a good many things about her. I think it is terrible."

"So do I," said Dr. Hugh. "When any one dares to talk about a young lady so good and pure as Miss Avenal, I think it is the very least they can do to designate plainly in what her offense lies, and what they know themselves, and not hide behind that convenient personage, 'they say.'"

There was a look in Dr. Hugh's honest blue eyes that made the relict of Judge Buncome feel smaller than she had for years; and it was in rather of a hesitating tone that she continued:

"Why, they say that she has a good deal of young gentlemen's company, and she is in the habit of receiving sums of money from some unknown source. It may be all right, and I presume it is, but people don't think it looks well."

"If those people ever mention the subject to you again, Mrs. Buncome, you can tell them that my brother and myself have done ourselves the honor to call upon Miss Avenal, frequently. I don't know that she has seen another gentleman since her sickness, besides ourselves and Mr. Wescott. And you can tell those people, further, if my opinion is of any value to them, that I have never before met a woman whom I consider so worthy of honor and respect and admiration as Miss Avenal."

Brave Dr. Hugh, he was valiant as a champion, but, as he went homeward, his great heart ached — ached for Katy Avenal. Had he, instead of lightening her burden, brought heavier upon her head? If he could only take every care and trouble from her? And then such a blessed and beautiful solution of his perplexity came to him: if she

would only be his wife—if he only had the right to take her in his strong arms and shield her from all the cruel mercies of the world—his beauty! his darling! It was only natural that he whose whole life had been spent for others should think first of what he would be to her, how he would care for her, and fill her lonely, sorrowful life full of beauty and gladness. But when the thought came to him, what she would be to him, what it would be to have the love of that fresh, beautiful, loving nature for his own, his very own, it was the most wondrously blissful thought he had ever entertained. For poor Dr. Hugh, as we have said, had not had much love through his life, his mother having been, as we said, a stern-faced gentlewoman, of severe turn, with forbidding, complaining manners. But the thought of this gentle, loving little woman, waiting for him at home while he made his professional rounds, to see her face light up at his coming, to see her grow bright, and well, and happy in the sunshine of his love, to be his inspiration, his blessing, and, if God pleased, to be the mother of his children—why, the very thought of all this made his heart beat with such slow, tremulous throbs of joy that his face shone as if he had just looked upon an angel.

It was in this exalted frame of mind that he entered his hall, and divested himself of his hat and cloak—not ordinary garments of broadcloth and beaver, but garments of the gods, crown and imperial toga. Entering the library, where he usually sat evenings, cheerful with lights and fire-blaze, he found his brother Tom.

The sunshine in his face thawed the thin crust of reserve Tom had preserved. He avowed that he had a communication he had long wanted to make to his brother, but had hesitated doing so; but to-night he looked so good-natured and smiling that he ventured. He loved Katy Avenal with all the deep, concentrated powers of his manhood, and he was perfectly confident that his love was warmly returned; and would his brother really advise him to marry her?

Now our doctor had not spent his whole life in cutting into the flesh of men (a wonderful surgeon was Dr. Hugh), in severing limbs and witnessing mortal agony, without obtaining self-control. But poor Dr. Hugh, to come out of summer into the depths of winter with no gracious interval of autumn!

"What reason have you for thinking, Tom, that Miss Avenal is in love with you?"

"Oh, she is so talkative always, so free to talk and laugh with me. She has given me all the encouragement in the world. Haven't you noticed it?"

Yes, poor Dr. Hugh remembered with a pang how she and Tom had laughed and chatted, and how shy and odd she had seemed in her manner to him of late. But one more question he asked of Tom.

"What have you to give, Tom, in return for the love of such a woman as Katy Avenal?"

"Oh, myself, you know."

This was very honest in Tom, very truthful, and impressed his brother strongly; for to poor Dr. Hugh, who had never had any youth, there was something awe-inspiring in these noble beings of nineteen years, who were so easy in their manners and so marvellously wise. He had been a father to Tom always, and since his mother's death he had tried to be father and mother both. He would not come between Tom and his happiness. But poor Dr. Hugh! he could not see Katy much, for he felt if he did he should forget his brotherly love, his honor. Tom trod the meadow path alone.

Tom had been promised a grand picnic on the grounds surrounding the mansion-house before his return to school; and, although he had little heart for it, his brother made preparations for it on a grand scale. It would please Tom. All the gentry from the neighboring towns were invited; and Katy—Katy must be there for Tom's sake; so he called to invite her the evening before. He had not been there for two weeks,

and Katy's face, as she rose to meet him, turned red and white in sudden changes. All for Tom, thought Dr. Hugh. It was his farewell party.

He could hardly stay to sit down, he was so busy, but he would take no denial. She must come. He obtained her promise at last, although she utterly refused at first. He made but a short call, and very constrained and formal at that.

The day was delightful, the people also. Susanna Buncome was radiant in blue silk and floating ribbons and tresses; and from the first moment of her arrival upon the ground Tom Maynard devoted himself to her. And poor Dr. Hugh, who was always doing disagreeable things, arrayed his face in the wedding garments of mirth, while his heart was holding a funeral.

And Katy—Katy was there, a lovely-looking little figure, in white muslin, with a bunch of pansies in her hair and at her bosom. But no one seemed to care for her society much, unless it were her scholars. They, indeed, attended her like a guard of honor. Mrs. Buncome found occasion to give her several little sly thrusts; and, indeed, upon the whole, poor little Katy had rather of a hard time of it. After a while she wandered away into a secluded little nook alone, save for the little zingara of a rivulet, that, wandering away forever and sobbing forever, seemed in its disquietude a fitting companion for her.

Tom, as we said, was devoted to the beautiful Susanna; but Dr. Hugh, the faithful, to a memory, often placing a rather uneasy dowager in a better situation, found his attention wandering after a little white figure that was not. At this moment his attention was attracted by Rob, who was partly hidden behind a tree, making the most mysterious signs and motions to him. He obeyed them at once, and Rob whispered in a low voice that he had something to tell him, and at once led the way into a remote path. Once out of sight of the gay throng, Rob paused, and faced the doctor. He looked melancholy and anxious.

"What is the matter, Rob," asked Dr. Hugh, good-humoredly.

"I d'no; but it scares me awful to see anybody out of their head, an' I believe she's goin' to be as crazy as a loon agin."

"Who?"

"The schoolma'am."

"Oh, no, Rob. She is doing finely. She is almost well. Was that what you brought me out here to tell me?"

"Well, you know I think everything of her, and I didn't know but you could give her something before she got clear down agin. She was jest as crazy as a loon last night, an' I seen her. You know you ketched her a cryin' over it, an' kissing of it. She didn't know as I dropped one of your gloves there, an' I seen her, an' there she is down there by the old rock now. I'll bet a dollar she's there any way, for I jest seen her, and—"

But Rob poured the rest of his words upon the winds, for, with long strides, Dr. Hugh vanished in the direction Rob had pointed out.

"O Katy, Katy Avenal!" But what was said there is not for us to reveal; for, bewildered by the sweet knowledge that Katy loved him, he forgot all the world, and poured forth his passion with all the unwasted romance of his youth and the strength of his manhood. And so sweet a sunshine never blessed him as dawned at his revelation in the shy, tearful eyes of Katy Avenal.

I have no idea but those happy lovers would have sat there till nightfall—for they had no hour-glasses to count the falling sands in Paradise—had not the voices of Katy's body-guard broke upon them half an hour later in an uproarious search for wild flowers.

Katy, with as shy a desire to hide her happiness as a ground-bird to hide her nested treasures, joined them, and Dr. Hugh returned to the grounds alone. To count all the delightful blunders Dr. Hugh made that afternoon and Katy's pink blushes, would be a vain proceeding. But, for all, the picnic was pronounced a success.

Mrs. Buncome was heard to wish that the judge might have lived to attend it; and she was heard further to observe how pleasing it would have been to her had little Samuel Miner lived to become such a noble, lovely man as Dr. Maynard. Greater commendation no man could desire. So the last carriage-full drove away. And as Dr. Hugh was left alone with his brother, his perfect bliss became shadowed with sorrowful regrets for Tom. "Poor Tom! poor fellow! how could he ever break it to him?"

So all that night Dr. Hugh endured his triumphant remorse, his joyful ignominy, as best he might. And, as he awoke in the morning, his first thought was, "O Katy Avenal! my Katy! my darling!" And then the remorseful undertone, "Poor Tom! poor fellow! how shall I ever tell him?" But Dr. Hugh had, all his life, been accustomed to doing hard things, and he was not one to flinch now from this delightfully hard task. And as soon as breakfast was over he decided to tell Tom, and endure his agony and reproaches as best he might. But Tom forestalled him, as they arose from the table. He told his brother he would like to speak with him if he had a few minutes' leisure. Poor Dr. Hugh followed him with a beating heart into the library, certain that Tom had discovered all, trying to summon up some words of comfort for the unhappy man who had lost Katy Avenal.

Tom began:

"You know, Hugh, what I told you some time ago about Miss Avenal?"

"Yes, I remember," said Dr. Hugh, with a compassionate look.

"Well, Hugh, I have discovered since then that I had mistaken the nature of my sentiments for her, and what I fancied was love was only a deep respect and admiration awakened by her beauty and ladylike demeanor. Her helpless situation, too, appealed to all the chivalry of my manhood, and all those different emotions, added to her evident preference for me, blinded me. But since then I have discovered that

it is impossible that she can make me as happy as another can. In fact, Susanna Buncome fully satisfies all the needs and requirements of both my heart and intellect. I confess frankly that I have done wrong, if I have by my attentions awakened hopes that I cannot fulfill. But you do not think the blow will be too severe upon her, do you? I thought I would consult you in a professional, as well as a brotherly way?"

Oh, blessed conceit, that cometh with the first beaver hat, and weareth away with the gloss thereof! Not in after years, when Tom was the happy husband of Susanna Buncome and the father of twins, did he seem so large in his own estimation as at that moment.

But it was not until two months later, when Tom received an invitation to his brother's wedding, that he fully understood the meaning of the warm hand-grasp which his brother gave him as he poured forth his confidence concerning Susanna.

The mystic chain that bound Rob to "Miss Wescott" was broken at about this time; for what will not unbounded wealth effect? He went to dwell at the mansion-house in easy service, for, fully realizing the gratitude due him, Dr. Hugh proves an easy master indeed, and Katy is the sweetest and gentlest of mistresses. There is talk, too, of a public school for Rob. If he proves faithful there is a future before him.

JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE'S

AS A

P. A. and P. I.

JOSIAH'S FIVE HOURS' RIDE.

Samantha at the Centennial.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"MY OPINIONS AND BETSEY BOBBET'S," AND "MY WAYWARD PARDNER."

This book the writer sends forth to the world, expecting it will (as did other martyrs: John Rogers and etcetery) tread on the hot coals of public opinion; be briled on the gridiron old bigotry keeps to brile her enemies on; be scalded by the melted lead of old custom; and be burnt up on the stake of opposition; yet still, upheld by firm principle and lofty emotions, she is able to say: "I am happy in the thought."

A kind and noble Artist has risked his fame by drawing a few pictures for the book.

THIS VOLUME CONTAINS 580 PAGES,

25 Full-Page and 50 other Engravings

Prices: In Fine English Cloth, $2.50; *do. do., Gilt Edge*, $3.00; *Half Turkey Morocco*, $4.00.

The book can be had by addressing

AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO.,

AGENTS WANTED. Hartford, Conn.

SAMANTHA'S NEW BOOK.

MY WAYWARD PARDNER;

OR MY TRIALS WITH

JOSIAH ALLEN, AMERICA, THE WIDDER BUMP AND ETC.

BY JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE.

THE BEST AND FUNNIEST BOOK OF ALL.

The immense satisfaction that the books "My Opinions and Betsey Bobbet's" and "Samantha at the Centennial" have given to their readers, has created a desire on the part of the public for a third book from the pen of the same author, which is now presented, and which in many respects surpasses any of the former brilliant efforts of the writer.

OVER ONE HUNDRED

APPROPRIATE ENGRAVINGS.

This book by the noted American Female Humorist, is rich and spicy throughout; brimful of wit, humor, sharp sayings and shrewd common sense, while every line in it paints a moral. and teaches a lesson. It is a continued story, most truthfully portrayed of the *trials*, *anxieties*, and *perplexities* of *every day life*, and like its predecessors strikes boldly at all evil and wrong doers, endeavoring to promote that which is Right, Honorable and Virtuous among all people. The volume contains about 500 pages, and is handsomely bound at the following prices:

FINE ENGLISH CLOTH, $2.50 ENGLISH CLOTH, GILT EDGES, $3.00 HALF TURKEY MOROCCO, $4,00